1-1-1984

Rethinking evaluation of teaching in higher education.

Leon E. Totten
University of Massachusetts Amherst

RETHINKING EVALUATION OF TEACHING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

A Dissertation Presented

By

LEON E. TOTTEN, III

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

May 1984

Education

RETHINKING EVALUATION OF TEACHING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

A Dissertation Presented

By

LEON E. TOTTEN, III

Approved as to style and content by:

Dr. David Schuman, Chairperson of Committee

Dr. Donald L. Banks, Member

Dr. Marion B. Rhodes, Member

Richard Clark
for MF
Mario Fantini, Dean
School of Education

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to Chrissy, my wife, and to Dorothy (Axelby) and Leon Totten, my parents.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

No work of this magnitude could be accomplished without great sacrifice by some and intense interest and caring by others. I first acknowledge Chrissy, Lee IV and Sara for their patience with my lack of availability and general grumpiness. I love them dearly for their faith in me. I next acknowledge David Schuman and Barbara Meyer for opening up their hearts and their home to me--it made so much difference. My fellow students were of immense help and support to me, particularly Peter Eddy, Richard Farrell, Lucy Nylund and Judy Siciliano. I also thank Don Banks and Marion Rhodes for all their concern. Special thanks goes to the Administration of Western New England College for financial support during this long process. Three others deserve mention. Jean Hebert did a marvelous job of typing the final draft. She was concerned and thoughtful in spite of the many changes and corrections. Ralph and Florence Chimelis did painstaking proofreading. Their ideas and corrections were very helpful. Part of Ralph's 71st birthday was spent helping me. They are dear and beautiful people who gave unselfishly of their time to meet my deadlines. Thank you.

ABSTRACT

Rethinking Evaluation of Teaching in Higher Education

May, 1984

Leon E. Totten, III, B.S.B.A., Western New England College

M.B.A., Michigan State University, Ed.D., University of Massachusetts

Directed by: Professor David Schuman

Evaluation of teaching in higher education is an important, yet difficult, process for deans, other administrators and teachers. The purpose of this dissertation is to advance helpful ideas to those who are charged with the responsibility to judge teaching, and to those who are being judged. A rethinking of four central questions (1. What is education?, 2. What is teaching?, 3. Can we teach?, 4. Are we doing a good job teaching?) is accomplished with help from the work of Hannah Arendt, Joseph Epstein, Louis Hartz, Richard Hofstadter, Robert Pirsig, Plato, Jean-Paul Sartre and others. A significant issue raised by these four questions is the whole notion of quality and excellence. In addition, judgment itself is explored through Kant's ideas of purposiveness and exemplary validity. The particular stories of three teachers in higher education are given wherein they relate their attitudes toward the four central questions, reflections on their best teachers from higher education and their ideas about quality and excellence in teaching. In conclusion, a review of several approaches or reactions taken toward evaluations is presented. Through this rethinking process it is learned that deans, administrators

and teachers need to, and can, take evaluation of teaching seriously. A framework of ideas, including excellence in teaching, philosophical agreement, shared judgment and hope for the future, and an experiment in thought which outlines a possible approach to the essentials in an evaluation process is provided to help us start anew in evaluating teaching. From this framework of ideas and the thought experiment, further research could implement the experiment and monitor the experiences. In all evaluations, the underlying notion of the pursuit and recognition of excellence in teaching must remain intact.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

INTRODUCTION

This is a philosophical and theoretical dissertation about the evaluation of teachers in higher education in the United States. It simply had to be this way. I have been interested in being a good teacher ever since I seriously considered a career as a teacher. Sometimes I think I am a good teacher, and sometimes I think I'm not. I have struggled for years with the notion of what it means to be a good teacher. I have evaluated myself, read student evaluations of my teaching and spoken to those who were my colleagues and superiors to learn about good teaching. I studied books on evaluating teaching and tried to learn methods of good teachers. It was a mixed bag of tricks, at best. What I had to do, finally, was write this dissertation. I needed to read all the theories and methods about good teaching and how to evaluate such teaching. Then I had to make sense out of all I read. In essence, I had to develop my own philosophy of good teaching. From that point I could then extend my philosophy of good teaching to ideas about how educators may be evaluated, i.e. theorize about ways to evaluate quality in teaching.

Deans and other administrators will make judgments with respect to the quality of teachers and teaching, yet quality is a difficult thing to judge. It seemed to me that the process of judging should be taken more seriously by everyone in higher education. When I was

new in teaching, my division chairman advised me that he had to evaluate my teaching by sitting in on my class. I was amenable to such an arrangement, as I was sincerely interested in how I might improve my teaching. After the class session was evaluated the division chairman and I talked about it. There was no major concern with my teaching per se; instead it seemed as though the chairman had to raise some issues in order to be helpful. The issues raised were so trivial and insignificant, to me, that I became suspect of the whole process of evaluation.

We, in higher education, have yet to be successful in settling on a single set of criteria or standards to carry out the process of judging teaching. It is not an easy task! What we seem to do is create an instrument of evaluation never fully acceptable to any of the participants. The result is usually half-hearted attempts, conflict, despair, and a lack of seriousness attached to the whole process of evaluating teaching. This dissertation does not purport to solve this dilemma with a single answer. Instead, I hope we can move away from the frustrations of searching for <u>the</u> standard and move toward the seriousness of judging the quality of teaching.

Chapter I explores dimensions of the environment of teaching utilizing the work of William James, Plato, Jean-Paul Sartre and others. Hopefully, if we understand education, teaching and qualifications needed to teach, we can determine how this affects the evaluation of teaching. Education is viewed in so many ways that we can become confused as to what the purpose of education

really is. We have to keep in mind that education is a personal process. It is an education of a person. Much of what we believe to be teaching comes from that which we have experienced in our specific teacher-student relationships. Teaching is an active role which is in relation to the activity of learning. The connection or relation becomes one of the individual subjective lives of teacher and student around an objective idea, that which is being studied. We also have to be clear about what qualifications are needed and, more importantly, what qualifications mean. To protect ourselves and insure good work we establish standards of qualifications.

Chapter II is a first look at how to evaluate teaching with the helpful insights of Louis Hartz, Richard Hofstadter and Robert Pirsig. Reviewing some common liberal themes in our society allows an identification of significant and pervasive criteria for evaluation. A liberal society like ours creates a universalization of particular ideas. Liberalism is tied directly to our American way of life and we are tied together by liberalism. For example, competency becomes a common qualification of good teaching in a liberal society. We also have in common a will to succeed. It is not whether one is a very good or very bad teacher, it is whether you are <u>trying</u> to be a good teacher. Also in this chapter, a sampling of the literature from people who tell us how to judge teaching quickly relates the extent of interest and direction of evaluations. It becomes an exercise in whose technique is better or whose check-

list is most inclusive or suitable. Using the liberal notions of uniformity, consistency, standards, absolutes and ideals, we tend to homogenize teachers through the striving process. In addition, quality and excellence are studied to help focus on the reason behind all the evaluations being done. Quality is what seems right, or good, or beautiful to us--our aesthetics. Excellence is personal centered. A person possessed with excellence may be a good teacher, but it doesn't matter to the person. The teacher is committed personally to excellence, and students may share that commitment, but there is nothing liberal about excellence.

Chapter III explores judgment itself, utilizing Hannah Arendt's brief work on the subject. Arendt tells us that Kant believed we must reflect on purposiveness and exemplary validity in order to judge. It is important, then, to discover the purposiveness of the activity of evaluating teaching. It seems to me that much of the renewed interest in the evaluation of teaching is due to a number of teachers who are judged to be poor and already have tenure. Therefore, a clear interest in evaluation of teaching must be for retention decisions. The idea of teaching improvement is sometimes a facade for the undercurrents of playing to particular evaluation forms and examples of this practice are reviewed. Joseph Epstein helps us develop a search for the exemplary teacher. A short review, from several former students, is presented, reflecting about teachers they believe to be good. There is also a review from current students and their reflections about a teacher who was judged to be 'distinguished'.

Chapter IV relates the stories of three teachers in higher education. The teachers were selected in accordance with ratings on a particular standardized student evaluation form. One selection was a teacher who received a very high rating, one who received a very low rating and one teacher with an average rating. The interviews with the teachers focus on their attitudes toward the issues raised in the first three chapters and reflections on their best teachers in higher education. Hopefully we learn that there is not one simple explanation as to what education and teaching are, or how they ought to be evaluated. There are many good explanations of such issues, not simply a right or wrong answer. Also, the in-depth views of these teachers will help us to appreciate the importance of varied, and even divergent, viewpoints.

Chapter V begins with a discussion of several approaches or reactions deans take toward evaluations. For example, evaluations may be considered a necessary evil to be dispensed with as quickly as possible. The aggressive self-interests of deans also have a major impact on the policies and procedures followed when judging teaching, and there are others who just don't like to be put into a position of judging. This chapter also sets forth the essential characteristics of an evaluation process which includes (1) a serious attempt to understand and recognize excellence in teaching, (2) a philosophical agreement in ideology, (3) a shared judgment and (4) hope for the future. These essentials are worked out in a thought experiment to help us start anew in evaluating teaching.

In all evaluations, the underlying notion of the pursuit and recognition of excellence in teaching must remain intact.

The dissertation, then, is a philosophical stance toward excellence in teaching and provides a theoretical base of ideas from which further research, experimentation and implementation may commence.

CHAPTER I

EDUCATION, TEACHING AND QUALIFICATIONS

The first two chapters revolve around four central questions:

1. What do we consider education?
2. What do we consider teaching?
3. Can one teach?
4. Are we doing a good job teaching?

Chapter I is involved with the first three central questions. The hope is to discover what are important criteria for the judging of teachers in higher education. Much of Chapter I will concern aspects of the problem as seen from a particular vantage point and that of a particular environment.[1]

Chapter II will address the fourth central question and will cover a sampling of the literature from people who tell us how to judge teachers. The point of view in Chapter II will be broadened by exploring some common liberal themes in our society.

What Is Education?

It seems that the first central question literally strikes us

---

[1]To help the reader understand, it is important to describe briefly my own particulars. BSBA - Marketing; MBA - Marketing; College teacher 1970 to 1973; Wine business executive 1973 to 1977; College teacher and administrator 1977 to present.

with its ominousness. The notion of education has been part of men and their relations for thousands of years.[2] To begin to write of education is to become overwhelmed by our own ignorance. Such an undertaking tempts us to shuffle the notion into oblivion with a metaphor of 'you know' what it is. To pursue this notion, indeed to push away the metaphor is education.[3]

Education is discussed in Plato's Republic, which was written around 380 B.C. The Republic ". . . purports to report a conversation supposed to have taken place some thirty or thirty-five years before."[4] What is clear, and is part of the consternation, is that education and its meaning is no clearer today than it was some 2400 years ago.[5]

Part of the problem in thinking about education is that it is a definition, a series of terms and categories, and a process, all at the same time. "Insistently, Socrates would urge his audience to define their terms, especially the ethical terms they were accustomed

---

[2]Or longer. To put a date on this is not of central importance. Suffice it to say, a long time.

[3]Certainly my own education. Perhaps as this is read it will become a portion of the reader's education.

[4]Plato's Republic, trans. G. M. A. Grube (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1974) taken from the preface p. iv.

[5]The conversations took place in 410 B.C., thirty years before 380 B.C. It is now the 1980's A.D. so, (1980 + 410 = 2390 years).

to using so freely."[6] The word educate was taken into the English language from the Latin word 'ēducātus' and is generally translated into meaning "brought up, trained. . . ."[7] Here is the whole definition: "Education is the development of the special and general abilities of the mind (learning to know): a liberal education. Training is practical education (learning to do) or practice . . . learning, knowledge, enlightenment."[8] Education is, then, learning to know and learning to do.

Education As Knowledge

Learning to know can be looked at and thought of in different ways. Many, perhaps, consider knowing as understanding, and the process of acquiring that knowledge as a search for truth. This is unqualified knowledge, a kind of intellectual curiosity which drives us to know. Plato says, ". . . when knowledge is qualified, it is of a qualified object. I mean this: when knowledge is of building a house it is called building knowledge? So when it becomes knowledge of a certain object, it becomes a certain kind of knowledge. . . ."[9]

---

[6] Plato's Republic, op. cit., taken from the introduction p. vi.

[7] The American College Dictionary (New York: Random House, Inc., 1961) p. 383.

[8] Ibid. Parentheses original.

[9] Plato's Republic, op. cit., p. 102.

Plato implies quite strongly that qualified knowledge is a collection of facts about an object. It is uncertain that when we have qualified knowledge, or a collection of facts, that we understand anything. Rather, we accept facts and use them in some way.

Unqualified knowledge is curiosity, a questioning toward truth. Qualified knowledge is knowledge of an object, accepting facts and using them. But both kinds of knowledge work on us at the same time. We accept and question all the time. The process of questioning is wonderful and an important part of education. The resultant facts, derived from questioning, tend to cause qualified knowledge to turn on itself as an object, that is unqualified knowledge about qualified knowledge. The facts we accept, we also question. We seek direction in this process of searching for truth and understanding. We simply want to know or believe. "Education then is the art of doing this very thing, this turning around, . . . to something more divine, . . . according to which it is turned, becomes useful and beneficial or useless and harmful."[10]

Unqualified knowledge, simply knowing rather than accepting facts, is not so simple to understand. But if we work at it we may be able to catch glimpses of truth. Sartre can help us. "In fact, the subjective life, just insofar as it is lived, can never be made

---

[10] Plato's Republic, op. cit., p. 171. Gilbert Highet said, "The complexities of human language, . . the invisible radiations that fill the universe, . . . all these can be faintly or crudely grasped, but never fully understood." (refer to footnote 31)

the object of knowledge. On principle it escapes knowing. . . ."[11] Qualified knowledge is objectification and unqualified knowledge is subjective life. Understanding is the combination of our qualified knowledge and unqualified knowledge. Sartre said it this way, "For us, truth is something which becomes, it has and will have become. It is a totalization which is forever being totalized. Particular facts do not signify anything; they are neither true nor false so long as they are not related, through the mediation of various partial totalities, to the totalization in process."[12] While there is much in Sartre's words we may not be able to make sense of, it is clear that qualified knowledge goes only so far. And that may not be enough in our own education.

Plato explains that education, as dialectic, is made up of four sections called knowledge, reasoning, belief and imagination. Plato said, "The last two together (belief and imagination) we call opinion, the other two (knowledge and reasoning) intelligence. Opinion is concerned with the process of generation while intelligence is concerned with being."[13] If we understand Plato correctly, being is understanding the whole intelligible world by living it, not

---

[11] Jean-Paul Sartre, Search For A Method, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Vintage Books, 1968) p. 11.

[12] Ibid., pp. 30, 31.

[13] Plato's Republic, op. cit., p. 185, parentheses added.

exclusively by objectification of knowledge.

Sartre tells us that, "Kierkegaard is right: grief, need, passion, the pain of men, are brute realities which can be neither surpassed nor changed by knowledge . . . the real cannot be reduced to thought. . . existence is the work of our inner life. . . and this work is directly opposed to intellectual knowing. . . one must live it. . . ."[14]

Education as knowledge, then, is best described as a two way street rather than two distinct roads to travel. Education is, on one side of the street, qualified knowledge or objectification. On the other side of the street is unqualified knowledge or subjective life. To combine and experience both types of knowledge then, and try to understand, ought to be an aim of our own education, rather than the one or the other.[15]

Education As Doing Something

Learning to do something is separate and distinct from learning to know. Learning to do is the process of training and is vocational in nature. It would be confusing to consider qualified knowledge,

---

[14] Sartre, op. cit., p. 12.

[15] I do not mean that one person should try to know everything; it is impossible if we are forever being totalized. If we were preparing a cake mix we would blend a number of ingredients, flour, sugar, baking soda, etc. In our own education I believe it is important to blend the qualified knowledge and the unqualified knowledge--continually.

part of learning to know, to be the same as learning to do something. To recall, qualified knowledge (objectification) is accepting facts and using them. Learning to do something is the process of acquiring those facts; qualified knowledge is a logical endpoint (usage) of the process. Vocational training allows us to develop specified skills with respect to a certain role in our society. That the role is house building, electricity or medicine is not significant. What is significant is that the process be done well and the skills acquired be put to use. For example, we may have some knowledge of electricity. Our qualified knowledge of that object, electricity, is such that we know if we touch electric wires we could be killed or severely shocked. We may not, however, know how to do an electrician's work. An electrician has learned to do specific work with electricity and has been trained in certain skills with respect to that work. We can readily assume that a licensed electrician has a qualified knowledge of electricity much different from our own as a result of the electrician's vocational education and training.

This is why we may be willing to pay an electrician $175 to install a new wire on our house to bring us the benefits of safe electricity. We may know, for example, that the old wire was faulty because it was letting rain water drip into the circuit breaker box. We also know that if the water continued to accumulate in and around the circuit breakers that it would ultimately cause a short circuit along with sparks and a potentially severe fire. (We also have qualified knowledge concerning fire, wood in our house and our

own safety). We probably do not have the skills necessary to install the new wire. Yes, we could attempt it by either trying to acquire the skills along the way or by making a most unfortunate mistake. On the other hand, the electrician has all the skills and, after learning them well, will do a good job. The electrician knows what gauge wire is appropriate, what the local electrical codes are, what else to look for in determining that the circuit board is safe to have electricity pass through it, etc. It should be clear now that qualified knowledge is different from learning to do something. Our society seems to value both learning to know and learning to do. But training for jobs and other education that is vocational in nature seems to be most valued today.[16] It is as though we must make a choice between learning to know or learning to do something. Perhaps this is an appropriate choice for certain individuals, but not for a community, state or country. We may believe that learning to know is the very best education one could experience, but would be hesitant to recommend that everyone only learn to know. What would we have done about the electric wire? No one would have learned to do an electrician's work.

---

[16]All we have to do is pick up a newspaper and see the number of training schools in hairdressing, welding, broadcasting, computer programming, etc.

Learning to do something is an appropriate part of education. Of course, like anything else, this idea can be carried to the extreme. Plato did just that. "Plato called his method of testing for objectivity 'dialectic' or 'true philosophy', and he proposed that education should consist chiefly in this."[17] Plato was going to see to it that the proper skills were developed. After he banished all persons in the city over ten years of age he would hope for the proper conventions to be learned, such as: ". . . when it is proper for the young to be silent in the company of their elders, how they should sit at the table, when to give up their seat, . . . deportment, and the other things of that kind."[18]

In essence, learning to do something becomes expansive as it is carried to its logical extremes. Much of what training is, toward the acquiring of skills, may be lost in the expansiveness. This attitude has led to a learning-to-do-citizenship or being a good American. This expansion of learning to do something is also called the education of the Whole Man. It is important to note here that the education of the Whole Man is not learning to know. This is

---

[17]Richard J. Burke, "Two Concepts of Liberal Education," Academe (Washington, D.C.: The American Association of University Professors, October 1980) p. 355, emphasis added.

[18]Plato's Republic, op. cit., pp. 90, 91 & 190. This seems to be an odd set of things to learn with very few elders present.

simply an extension of learning to do something. A popular extension of the education of the Whole Man is the prolific growth of student personnel services on our college campuses. One's education, goes the belief, is more than mere 'book learning'.[19]

Plato said, ". . . the man who sees things as a whole is a dialectian; the man who does not, is not." But he was talking about belief and imagination and knowledge and reasoning to be a dialectian. The Whole Man as we know it, ". . . was the counterpart of physical training. It educated the guardians through habits; its melodies gave them a certain inner harmony, . . . but there was no knowledge in it. . . ."[20] Learning to be a good citizen and a well rounded person have much in common. "Marx wrote that the ideas of the dominant class are the dominant ideas. He is absolutely right."[21] The dominant ideas are what determines much of the curriculum for learning to do something.

It seems strange to argue against learning to do something as a part of education. It seems, rather, that all arguments focus on the ideas of the dominant class. If learning to do something means

---

[19]It seems to me that the premise is true, but do we need educators for student life? Or can a student simply live their subjective life?

[20]Plato's Republic, op. cit., pp. 174 & 188.

[21]Sartre, op. cit., p. 17.

we have to accept things we don't believe in, or don't want to believe in, then it is wrong. It is simply a matter of what the dominant ideas are. "Everything you think you think because somebody promoted the ideas. Education--nothing but promotion. Good promotion and bad promotion."[22] A big part of our dilemma is trying to figure out what we do believe. Dewey said, "Men have long had some intimation of the extent to which education may be consciously used to eliminate obvious social evils through starting the young on paths which shall not produce these ills. . . ."[23] This idea of training, or being brought up, is central in our thoughts about what education is. Training for skills seems to be a good dominant idea, just as training the youth to be citizens is also good. As soon as we move beyond these particular aims then the dominant ideas are no longer held to be good by most of our society. This contradiction appears, at least one way, in the form of anti-intellectualism which will be discussed in Chapter II.

Education As Potpourri

Education has been defined in so many ways, using so many different categories, that it is literally impossible to be complete.

---

[22]Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., Player Piano (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1952) pp. 194, 195.

[23]John Dewey, Democracy and Education (New York: The Free Press, 1916) p. 79.

For example, Dewey discusses democracy and education, education as a necessity of life, as a social function, as direction, as growth, as conservative and as progressive.[24] Bowles and Gintis discuss education, inequality and the meritocracy, as personal development, as change and revolution.[25] But whatever the categories, they all seem to revolve around learning to know and learning to do something.

So much is promised or expected from the process of education. "Good education and upbringing . . . will lead to men of better nature. . . ."[26] Or, good education will give you a better life along with a better job, more money and more happiness. This line of reasoning is most magical. Many parents encourage (push) their children to go to college so they can have a 'better' life. College education becomes the waving of the magic wand over the lives of our children. The magic of an education is present for parents and their children, but sometimes the students hate it. ". . . they encourage students to regard higher learning as a commodity. . . ."[27]

---

[24]Ibid., from the contents. Emphasis added.

[25]Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, Schooling in Capitalist America (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1976) from the contents.

[26]Plato's Republic, op. cit., p. 89.

[27]Christopher Jencks and David Riesman, The Academic Revolution (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1969) p. 153. Some students plod their way through college, which is always in the way of their real life, to barely graduate. So much for the magic of education!

Education is a definitive process which seems to resemble Sartre's truth; a totalization which is forever being totalized. The clearest description of this totalization comes from David Schuman. Basically what Schuman said was that we can think of this process as a spiral which is set in the context of our culture; it is personal centered with themes within that spiral (history within history).[28] This is an important process to understand and may, in fact, be exactly what education really is. The idea of totalization and/or the spiral will help us later to understand the problem of judging.

Education is not only considered a process but it is even thought of as being more specific. It is a process which occurs in a certain place. Not a place within our history, although that is true, but a physical place called a school or college or university. If we want to learn to be a carpenter, we would apprentice ourselves to a carpenter and learn in that way. If we want to join the armed services, we would apply at a recruiting office. If we want to mail a package across the country, we would go to the post office. Likewise, it follows, if we want an education we go to school. The physical institutions where the process of education seems to be centered have taken on great significance.

We all hear public service announcements on the radio speaking

---

[28]David Schuman, remarks made in a class on October 8, 1980.

about the important education of our country. The announcement usually ends with the plea of: give to the college of your choice. If you believe in education then you should send financial support to a school. The physical place of education takes on its own significance distinct and separate from the process. Education now becomes a system; not so much a system of process, instead a system of places. The educational system is also a group of people (administrators, teachers, students, staff, etc.) that work on education in a place. The educational system is very real content within our culture. If we are going to accomplish anything in education then we have to adjust and fine tune the system. The process of education tends to lose significance to the system of education. "In the past the man has been first; in the future the system must be first."[29] We must assume that Frederick Taylor was serious when he made this statement and that he would make the spiral 'system centered' rather than 'personal centered'.

College accreditation is a modern process that inflicts itself on the education system every decade or so. The whole process of accreditation and its effects on education swings in the direction of 'system centered' versus 'personal centered'. "The real University is not a material object. It is not a group of buildings that can

---

[29]Frederick Winslow Taylor, The Principles of Scientific Management (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1967) p. 7.

be defended by police. He explained that when a college lost its accreditation, nobody came and shut down the school. Classes did not stop. Everything went on just as before. Students got the same education they would if the school didn't lose its accreditation."[30]

The educational system (rather than one's education) takes up most of the discussions about education today. The parents of students, who don't want to be in college, look at the college degree as important in their child's life. Going to college is looked at as an important part of life. The college (the place) is then judged as doing a good job or bad job. The system of education becomes a wonderful thing and an awful thing at the same time. Gilbert Highet describes this by saying, "Education in America and in the other countries of the West is an inspiriting achievement: all those light, healthy schools, those myriad colleges, so many youngsters having a fine time and not working too hard."[31] If we understand Highet he does believe that the achievement of education is good, but the system has its problems. Highet points out two important weaknesses in our educational system. One is that ". . . it does not often carry over into mature life. The average American would

---

[30]Robert M. Pirsig, Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance (New York: Bantam Books, 1974) p. 142.

[31]Gilbert Highet, "The Unpredictable Intellect," Toward Liberal Education, fourth edition, ed. Louis G. Locke, William M. Gibson and George Arms (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1962) p. 175.

rather be driving a car along a crowded highway than reading a book or thinking. Why this should be so, I cannot tell. It must be something wrong with education. Probably it is the cult of the average: the idea that schools exist in order to make everyone pretty much the same. . . ."[32]

Highet presents another weakness when he says, ". . . education has become almost too easy to get."[33] The place of education is too easy to become a part of. There used to be an attitude that a higher education, in a college or university, was for only a privileged few. Only the privileged were able to get into and pay the tuition of college. Rudolph tells us, "Higher education in America began with Harvard, . . . "[34] This was necessary because, "The ruling class would have been subjected to mechanics, cobblers, and tailors; . . ."[35]

---

[32]Ibid. Emphasis added. It seems obvious to me that Highet believes in education as a process. Part of the system is also thought of as positive; 'healthy schools', 'myriad colleges'. But Highet criticizes the system. His thesis in this article is that education must do justice to exceptional minds.

[33]Ibid.

[34]Frederick Rudolph, The American College and University (New York: Vintage Books, 1962) p. 3.

[35]Ibid., p. 6.

In 1770 a South Carolina newspaper editor wrote, "'Learning would become cheap and too common, and every man would be for giving his son an education.'"[36] Education, or at least the entering of the educational system, was for the privileged. It all began with Harvard. It still is for Harvard. But with the help of Henry Adams and Frederick Taylor we can see that the educational arguments really end up as systems arguments.

Henry Adams went to Harvard and he had some words about the educational system. "If parents went on, generation after generation, sending their children to Harvard College for the sake of its social advantages, they perpetuated an inferior social type, . . ."[37] Adams believed that the privileged few in the college was not the correct way to run an educational system. To be born to privileged parents meant that education was readily available to you. In fact, education was expected to be completed. Today education is available to many. Hence, if you want to be among the privileged you should go to college. And, if you go to college you should receive a good education. Taylor combines all of these thoughts when he said, "In the future it will be appreciated that our leaders must be trained

---

[36] Ibid., p. 20.

[37] Henry Adams, The Education of Henry Adams, Sentry edition (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1961) p. 65.

right as well as born right, . . ."[38]

School is the physical spot where formalized learning takes place and is thought of as education. Schooling is the formalization of certain processes and is part of an education, but that's not all there is to an education. The formalization or systemization of the process is convenient and easy. It is easy to write about formalized education as one could easily discover by searching under the word 'education' in any library. To study education in this manner, however, is to miss education almost entirely. It is an attempt to make the educational system the center of our culture. It would be wrong and silly to suggest that the educational system is not central to the culture of Americans; it is. However, it is very, very important to keep the cultural spiral personal centered and to keep education personal centered.

One of the most interesting facts to emerge from the history of higher education in America is that no matter what was done in college classes, the students learned things. An education is a personal process. This does not mean that it is totally a turned inward process, rather it is personal centered. It is an education of a person. A person's education is affected by the formalized educational system, but there is more to a personal education. Much of the learning that a child does in the first five or six years of life is done without the

---

[38]Taylor, op. cit., p. 6.

benefit of our educational system.[39]

Learning

Recall that the definition of education is learning to know and learning to do something. It would seem appropriate, then, that 'learning' is a central aim of an education. But what is learning? This is a loaded and probably impossible question to be sure. There is a whole set of literature about learning, much of it in psychology. Some of the literature may be helpful in learning to do something, but the path of much of the literature is simply too narrow. Part of the learning theory that attempts to explain learning in broad ways does not seem very helpful, especially to a personal centered education. A typical example is called, 'A Modern Theory of Learning' by William Kilpatrick. Kilpatrick compares and contrasts in his article what he calls, "The common or conventional theory, hereinafter called 'learning theory A' (or type A for short), . . . (against) the theory here proposed, called herein 'learning theory B' (type B). . . ."[40] Kilpatrick gives us a definition of learning that is not much help in understanding learning. He underscores this definition by reminding his reader

---

[39]I remember both my son and daughter during those years. It was amazing to me that they learned so many new things. It seemed as though every week during their first five or six years they had mastered something new.

[40]William Heard Kilpatrick, "A Modern Theory of Learning," Selected Readings In the Philosophy of Education, third edition, ed.

that it is, ". . . the result of many years of study by the author of the problem of learning. . . Learning is the tendency of any part or phase of what one has lived so to remain with the learner as to come back pertinently into further experience. When such a tendency has been set up, learning has to that extent been effected."[41]

Kilpatrick sets too many limits on us with this definition. A part of our subjective life, which has been lived, must come back into our future experience. But it must do so pertinently. If part of our life cannot be exactly (pertinently) related to an incident then it really isn't learned. And learning is only possible, or measurable, to the extent it is pertinent. When learning is discussed in marketing textbooks the only pertinent experience is whether or not a person has learned to purchase or not purchase. To understand learning does not have to be as abstract as type A or type B, nor does it have to be as narrow as purchase or non-purchase. Whether we focus on Kilpatrick's learning or that of consumers, we are looking at learning as a process of groups of people. Does type A or type B work best with this class? Do we have enough consumers who have learned to purchase our product? This learning is too narrow in its scope (learning to do something) and too broad in its meaning (groups).

Joe Park (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1968) pp. 107, 108. Kilpatrick sets up two abstract ideas. Theory A is a theory for learning from books while theory B is learning from behaving (doing).

[41] Ibid., p. 109.

Education is personal centered and learning must also be that way. As a result, the group effect of learning does not matter much and that is why whatever was done in college classes, students learned. One of the better definitions of learning is, "Learning refers to changes in behavior as a result of experience."[42] This definition of learning doesn't become involved in the restrictive pertinency of Kilpatrick. It does bring together two very important elements of our education, that of experiences and behavior. The key to learning is to change us in some way. Sartre said, "It was at about this time that I read Capital and German Ideology. I found everything perfectly clear, and I really understood absolutely nothing. To understand is to change, to go beyond oneself."[43] Learning, then, is a personal process which combines our subjective life experiences and a change in our behavior. Learning is our movement within the spiral of our culture, part of the totalization. What is most important about learning is the combination of our experiences and a change or movement in our actions. Pertinency to action or previous experience is a wrong category to consider. The joining together of the two is most important. Sartre said, ". . . it was not the idea which unsettled us; nor was it the condition of the worker, which we knew abstractly but which we had not experienced. No, it was

---

[42]Louis E. Boone and David L. Kurtz, Contemporary Marketing, Third edition (Hinsdale, Illinois: The Dryden Press, 1980) p. 115.

[43]Sartre, op. cit., pp. 17, 18.

the two joined together."[44]

Learning is a central aim of our education and it is a necessarily personal centered process. What seems to become mixed up in our educational system is utilitarian (pertinent) learning versus going beyond ourselves. Sartre's notions are clearly personal and, as a result, sometimes difficult to explain and certainly difficult to understand. What is easier to understand is education with utilitarian purposes. Learning then becomes less personal and more general with a commonality of utility. The way it sounds is like this; learning is a central aim of education and, "Education is the acquisition of the art of the utilisation of knowledge."[45] Education, as described by Whitehead and others, becomes general (utilitarian) instead of personal. Whitehead is very clear about this, "Pedants sneer at an education which is useful. But if education is not useful, what is it? Is it a talent (personal), to be hidden away (personal) in a napkin? Of course education should be useful, whatever (general) your aim in life."[46]

This transition from personal knowledge, learning or education to that of utilitarian purposes is well accepted as part of our

---

[44]Ibid., p. 18.

[45]Alfred North Whitehead, "The Aims of Education," Selected Readings, etc., ed. Joe Park, op. cit., p. 192.

[46]Ibid., p. 190. Parentheses and emphasis added.

educational system. And although we accept the notion of education as being useful we also tend to negate learning that is not utilitarian and become frustrated at our attempts to make our learning useful. It is simply a fact that some education is very useful (our electrician's). The point here is to reiterate the need for both learning to know and learning to do something. At the same time it is important to understand the frustration of pursuing only education which is useful or only education which is not utilitarian.

Business students complain bitterly about having to take a laboratory science as part of their business program or to take their arts and science electives. The words are the same, 'how will these courses help me?'. There is no way to justify the courses through the notion of being well rounded. They want more accounting courses or more computer courses. They can use those. We can't explain that they will be frustrated at their expectations in the useful courses, all this will come through their lived (subjective) experiences.

No matter what the level of usefulness or pertinency a particular experience contains, there is always a point where the utilitarian purposes are lost.[47] On the other hand, those experiences that do

---

[47]My friend John, who is a physicist, mentioned to me that perhaps physics can be more useful than marketing, but there comes a point where even a physicist must accept the fact that some of the knowledge is not useful.

not seem at all useful necessarily and conceivably can be useful at some time. Our totalization, which is forever being totalized, would seem to be the reason for this. Our personal knowledge is a personal education in which the objective notions or ideas are joined together in and through our subjective life. It is significant to carry out, to the farthest point, the notion of education being personal centered. An educated person has utilitarian and general purposes in our culture, but if the education is personal, then each person who is educated stands apart from all others by virtue of that process. What separates us and relates us at the same time is education, as a personal centered process. Simpson helps pull all the points together, "Any education that matters is liberal. All the saving truths and healing graces that distinguish a good education from a bad one or a full education from a half-empty one are contained in that word. It now distinguishes whatever nourishes the mind and spirit from the training which is merely practical or professional or from the trivialities which are no training at all. Such an education involves a combination of knowledge, skills and standards."[48]

Simpson combines learning to know and learning to do. But he points out another part of the process of education which he terms 'standards'. He talks specifically about the generalized standards of sophistication, moral values and challenge. But he also mentioned

---

[48]Alan Simpson, "The Marks of an Educated Man," Toward Liberal Education, ed. Louis G. Locke, et. al., op. cit., p. 47.

that, "A man is uneducated who has not mastered the elements of clean forcible prose and picked up some relish for style. It is a curious fact that we style everything in this country--our cars, our homes, our clothes--except our minds."[49] Style is a personal, and not at all general, standard of education. We are aware of our own attitudes about education. Our experiences within the educational system and within our American culture have helped us develop our own standards (style) of education. The way we relate to and separate from the educational system is based partially on our cultural standards or expectations and partially on our own personal style (which may always be hidden to others--one's outward behavior is not what I am thinking about).

Education As A Special Experience

Not all of us think of our education as a special experience. What makes our education special, however, is that we are involved in our personal knowledge. That sounds fairly simple and easy to understand--personal knowledge. One of the best statements concerning personal knowledge was written by Michael Polanyi. Polanyi, a chemist and philosopher, wrote an enormous work on his view, or style, of personal knowledge. Polanyi says, "Only a tiny fraction of all knowable facts are of interest to scientists, and scientific passion

---

[49] Ibid., p. 49.

serves also as a guide in the assessment of what is higher and what of lesser interest; . . . I want to show that this appreciation depends ultimately on a sense of intellectual beauty; that it is an emotional response which can never be dispassionately defined, . . ."[50] Education is a special and personal experience. In our totalization we are always in the process of developing our own sense of intellectual beauty.

Polanyi tells us that this selection process is an emotional response that cannot be defined, standardized, generalized or measured. Part of our special experience is a chance to become emotionally involved and personally committed to our education. It is especially pleasant to understand education in this way rather than be searching for utility exclusively. Another part of the process of our own education is the notion of discovery. Sometimes the discovery is merely reading the best books we have ever read. Other times it is understanding things in ways we have never before understood. These discoveries, or heuristic leaps, are a major part of our totalization and we learn. We are unable to think about things in the ways we have before. Polanyi explains the discoveries as informal (personal) acts, ". . . because the acceptance of a new conception, even when it is specified by a definition, is ultimately an informal act: a transformation of the framework on which we rely in the process of

---

[50]Michael Polanyi, Personal Knowledge (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962) p. 135.

formal reasoning. It is the crossing of a logical gap to another shore, where we will never again see things as we did before."[51]

It seems that education has to be a special experience to a person in order for the process of education to mean anything. The mark of an educated person, to borrow Alan Simpson's title, would be a personal commitment to their own education. And to understand an educated person is to understand a person in depth, not a group of people who conform to some generalization or standard. The standard is the educated person and their personal centered commitment. We ". . . ought to study real men in depth, not dissolve them in a bath of sulphuric acid."[52] Polanyi understands this well and that is the (hidden) style of personal knowledge. He also understands our totalization and the spiral in which we exist. Polanyi, in one paragraph, provides us with a nicely worded summary of what the totalization process as education is, "I must admit now that I did not start the present consideration of my beliefs with a clean slate of unbelief. Far from it. I started as a person intellectually fashioned by a particular idiom, acquired through my affiliation to a civilization that prevailed in the places where I had grown up, at

---

[51]Ibid., p. 189.

[52]Sartre, op. cit., p. 44.

this particular period of history. This has been the matrix of all my intellectual efforts. Within it I was to find my problem and seek the terms for its solution. All my amendments to these original terms will remain embedded in the system of my previous beliefs. Worse still, I cannot precisely say what these beliefs are. I can say nothing precisely. The words I have spoken and am yet to speak mean nothing: it is only I who mean something by them. And, as a rule, I do not focally know what I mean, and though I could explore my meaning up to a point, I believe that my words (descriptive words) must mean more than I shall ever know, if they are to mean anything at all."[53] How can our education be called anything but a personal and special experience?

One of the discoveries to understand education is that we must put an enormous amount of faith and trust in those people we choose as teachers.[54] In essence we put our beliefs into the form of faith and trust. "In the fourth century A.D. St. Augustine. . . taught that all knowledge was a gift of grace, for which we must strive under

---

[53]Polanyi, op. cit., p. 252. The paragraph is packed with so much: intellectually fashioned (style), affiliation to a civilization (the context of our culture), prevailed where I had grown up (personal centered), the matrix (spiral or totalization), find my problem (personal), all amendments remain embedded (themes within the spiral), the words mean nothing (personal belief--understanding the man in depth), the words mean more than I shall ever know (you surpass yourself and do not know, cannot know, the uses to which your knowledge will be put).

[54]Certainly not every teacher, but those we grow to like, enjoy or feel close to. Some of my student colleagues feel very uncomfortable about doing this and they seem constantly frustrated.

the guidance of antecedent belief: nisi credideritis, non intellegitis (unless ye believe, ye shall not understand). Belief, here, is no longer a higher power that reveals to us knowledge lying beyond the range of observation and reason, but a mere personal acceptance which falls short of empirical and rational demonstrability."[55] Polanyi explains that we are really reducing our belief to the status of subjectivity, which is to cause our knowledge to fall short of universality, an imperfection of sorts.[56] If the imperfection is not fitting into the universal then that is exactly right and correct for a personal education. It is the belief in joining together of the objective-subjective that helps develop significance and understanding in our own education. We join ourselves to the objective notions by way of faith and trust in those we choose as teachers. This is fundamental to a personal education. The joining together makes education a special experience. It also provides a context for beliefs with respect to the second central question. It is now time to leave education and turn to the educator.

What Is Teaching?

Much of what we believe to be teaching comes from that which we have experienced in our specific teacher-student relationships.

---

[55]Polanyi, op. cit., p. 266.

[56]Ibid.

Although we normally think of these relationships as part of the formalized process called schooling, without a relation of ourself to and with other people (formalized or not) as teachers, we may not understand anything about teaching. Of course we presume that a relationship involves us with other people. Other people are not all that necessary. Certainly the proverbial young boy raised by wolves tends to indicate this. But the young boy enters into relationships with his world of wolves, other animals, the woods and mountains. In our spiral, set in the context of our culture and being personal centered, we enter into relationships with our world. William James said, ". . . if we start with the supposition that there is only one primal stuff or material in the world, a stuff of which everything is composed, and if we call that stuff 'pure expe-rience', then knowing can easily be explained as a particular sort of relation toward one another into which portions of pure experience may enter."[57]

If we follow James in his thoughts it seems that people, wolves, nature, woods, etc., are all the same stuff (pure experience). The stuff of the world is all the same. The paper we read, the pen we use and the wine we sip all started out the same. We have in common being made of the same stuff of the world. We come into relation

---

[57]William James, Essays in Radical Empiricism and A Pluralistic Universe, ed. Ralph Barton Perry (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1971) p. 5.

with all these things as pure experience, and the relationship itself is the same stuff, within the spiral. But the relationship is what we need to extract (if such a thing is possible) and discuss. James highlighted the relationship when he said, "The relation itself is a part of pure experience; one of its 'terms' becomes the subject or bearer of the knowledge, the knower, the other becomes the object known."[58]

It is important to try and understand what James calls the 'terms' of the relation, that is, the knower and the object known. At first glance this may seem to indicate the teacher-subject relationship. But it appears that the knower can be either a student or teacher, and the object known is an objective idea immersed in the particular spiral (subjective life) of either the student or teacher. James uses an example of paint. Paint sitting in a paint store ready to be sold is simply a salable product. Whereas the paint set upon a canvas by an artist with other paints makes the same paint into so much more than just a product to be sold. The object, paint, has become, and will continue to become, once it is enmeshed into the subjective life of the artist and the lives of those who view the work of art. The paint enters into a relation with the stuff of the artist and the stuff of the viewers of the art.[59]

---

[58] Ibid.

[59] Ibid., p. 7.

James further explains that ". . . a given undivided portion of experience, taken in one context of associates, play the part of a knower, of a state of mind, of 'consciousness'; while in a different context the same undivided bit of experience plays the part of a thing known, of an objective 'content'. In a word, in one group it figures as a thought, in another group as a thing. And, since it can figure in both groups simultaneously we have every right to speak of it as subjective and objective both at once."[60] This sounds very much like our spiral, which is personal centered, and in which we enter into relations with other spirals which are also personal centered. But we don't want to lose the point of this question, so it is important to take out of the spiral a particular set of roles, those of teacher and student.

Sartre helps us understand that teachers and students do not, or should not, assume passive roles. Rather, teaching is an active role which is in relation to the activity of being a student. "Our roles are always future . . . (a relation which has been lived profoundly in the past) manifests itself . . . only as the line of flight in a new enterprise. If it is a role, it is a role which one invents, which one does not cease to learn again under circumstances always new, . . . Complexes, the style of life, and the revelation of the past-surpassing as a future to be created are one and the same reality.

---

[60]Ibid., p. 8.

It is the project as an oriented life, as man's affirmation through action."[61]

It is this active and oriented role of the teacher, particularly in relation to a student, which best describes what teaching is. Attitudes toward teaching are as diverse as those attitudes toward education. What is interesting, however, is the hesitation of students to put their faith in their teachers. It is an interesting contrast to understand the Western attitudes toward the teacher and the Eastern attitudes. Eugen Herrigel turned himself over to a teacher of archery, but his Western culture fought him all the way. "How often I had silently envied all those pupils of the Master who, like children, let him take them by the hand and lead them. How delightful it must be to be able to do this without reserve."[62] Our cultural context causes a great reluctance, on our part, to enter into a particular set of relations. The cultural contrast is strikingly different. In the Eastern context, "Often nothing keeps the pupil on the move but his faith in his teacher, . . ."[63] Our beliefs cause us to avoid the unknown like a bad disease. We are

---

[61]Sartre, op. cit., pp. 107, 108.

[62]Eugen Herrigel, Zen In The Art of Archery, trans. by R. F. C. Hull (New York: Vintage Books, 1971) p. 37.

[63]Ibid., p. 51.

afraid to 'bet' on the unknown. We want to be sure.[64] Buber said, ". . . man can attain to true life only by surrendering himself to the unknown, and that the reward, the manifold harvest, is called revelation."[65]

The relations between teacher and student are paramount in the roles of both. But more often than not the relations must be created. It is not the teacher who must do the creating, rather it is the entering into the particular set of relations by both which is the creation. Buber, at first, appears to set certain responsibilities on the role of the teacher. But he also sets up responsibilities for the students. "The influence. . . of the right teacher upon the right pupil, is not merely compared to, but even set on a par with, divine works which are linked with the human maternal act of giving birth. Either the teachings live in the life of a responsible human being, or they are not alive at all. The present generation universally believes more and more unreservedly that it can get along without the teachings and rely on a mode of action which in its own opinion--is correct."[66] Buber sets up the nature of responsibilities in the

---

[64] I am always amazed at the handles announced at horse tracks. The amount of money spent betting on unknowns is staggering, sometimes as much as $500,000 per day. At the same time, putting your faith in your teacher carries, apparently, much higher stakes for a student.

[65] Martin Buber, "On National Education," The Writings of Martin Buber, ed. Will Herberg (New York: Meridian Books, 1956) p. 291, emphasis added.

[66] Ibid., pp. 318, 319 & 321. Emphasis added.

relationship and he also captures the essence of a tension at the same time. Part of the relations involves the student turning himself over to the teacher through faith and trust. We will assume here (although we have no reason to believe it is always true) that the teacher, while being taught, developed a personal commitment to his own education. When Herrigel studied archery under the Master, the Master clearly explained the responsibilities of personal commitment by the students; "Walk past everything without noticing it, as if there were only one thing in the world that is important and real, and that is archery!"[67] This particular type of commitment would be difficult to conceive of in our colleges and universities today, especially among the undergraduates.

But if a personal commitment is a responsibility of the student, then so it is for the teacher as well. The connection or relation becomes one of the individual subjective lives around an objective idea. "The teacher-pupil relationship has belonged since ancient times to the basic commitments of life and therefore presupposes, on the part of the teacher, a high responsibility which goes far beyond the scope of his professional duties."[68] The professional duties of a teacher are deliberately ignored here because they are the duties

---

[67]Herrigel, op. cit., p. 38. I asked some marketing seniors if they could approach their study of marketing with this kind of personal commitment. The answer was a resounding, 'no way'.

[68]Ibid., p. 45. Although Herrigel points to the teacher's 'high responsibility' he does so assuming, what I would like to assume, that the pupil brings with him into the relations--'uncritical veneration of his teacher'.

required by the schooling process or system.

Responsibilities Of A Teacher

A teacher must bring into a relationship with students a set of 'higher' responsibilities. What makes these responsibilities different or higher is simply the distinction between what is expected from the schooling process or educational system. We find out about the thoughts of teaching through memorandum, faculty handbooks and faculty meetings. The thoughts and ideas of teaching become expectations of the educational system, formalized, professional duties. The higher responsibilities should, however, revolve around the question, did the student learn anything? A student, Nathaniel Shaler, wrote about how his teacher (Louis Agassiz) taught him. It is a short piece about the method Agassiz used of giving Shaler a specimen of a fish and said, "Find out what you can without damaging the specimen."[69] Shaler was then left to hundreds of hours of undirected, or self directed, probing. At the first question period Shaler was told that he was all wrong. After a hundred or more hours of work the teacher gave him some bones and asked him to make sense of them. Shaler said, "I soon found that they were skeletons of half a dozen fishes of different species; the jaws told me so much at a first inspection."[70] So Shaler learned something from his teacher;

---

[69]Nathaniel Southgate Shaler, "How Agassiz Taught Shaler," Toward Liberal Education, ed. Louis G. Locke, et. al., op. cit., p. 7.

[70]Ibid., p. 8.

or was it from his own inquiry? Shaler said, "Agassiz's welcome went to my heart--I was at once his captive."[71]

It is a responsibility of a teacher to present an atmosphere where those students who wish to make a personal commitment to their own education can flourish. Agassiz did this by more than method. Most of what was accomplished was probably done by his welcome, rather than his method. T. S. Eliot brings us another example of a student who learned something. He called it the discovery of poetry. ". . . the discovery may be more important than the poem through which we make the discovery."[72] Eliot credits the teacher, or more specifically what the teacher brings into the relation, as the reason for his learning. "And the teacher had not told the class that they were to admire this poem, . . She had chosen wisely and with taste, but had left the poem to do its own work."[73]

When one reads Eliot's ideas we immediately become trapped into believing that if we, as teachers of poetry, were to choose poems wisely <u>all</u> of our students would discover poetry. Eliot realizes that through this 'method' of choosing wisely some of the students <u>will</u>

---

[71]Ibid., p. 6.

[72]Ibid., p. 373, T. S. Eliot, "On Teaching The Appreciation of Poetry."

[73]Ibid., p. 376.

discover poetry. The point is, it will happen to those students who have made a personal commitment to their poetry education. ". . . something has caused the energies of his mind, hitherto dissonant or unused, and the emotions with which he once played, or which played with him, to combine into a new, living, active, creative synthesis."[74] What is this something that causes a student to learn? It is not a method of the teacher, nor is it any formalized process of education. The something is the particular relations of the teacher and the student.

Closeness Between Teachers And Students

The something is 'closeness' between teachers and students. It is tempting to leave closeness undefined and accept that the definition would be personal centered for each teacher based on the way they viewed their world. The danger that lies here though is that the notion can become generalized, professionalized and administered as useful. This is exactly the wrong thing to do. Closeness as a particular relation could be simplified to a common friendship attempt by a teacher as a useful project, and it is so often looked at in this way.

Closeness is, rather, a high responsibility of a teacher. Closeness revolves around being able to share ideas with students and have them share their ideas with their teachers. An intellectual

---

[74]Ibid., p. 170, Highet.

friendship is the best we could hope for. Closeness is a high responsibility of a teacher and is not all the same as a mutual friendship between two people, the way we normally and commonly view friendships. Buber said, "It is essential that he should awaken the I-you relationship in the pupil, too, who should intend and affirm his educator as this particular person; . . . Whether the I-you relationship comes to an end or assumes the altogether different character of a friendship, it becomes clear that the specifically educational relationship is incompatible with complete mutuality.[75]

History reflects that closeness was a significant part of teaching. Grant Showerman, in the early 1900's, reacted negatively to the emergence of higher education in the United States after the Civil War. Somehow an organized college education with its utilitarian purposes was encroaching on and changing the closeness between professors and their students.[76] Gone was closeness and to replace it was organization, utility, moral control and lack of discipline. Thomas Le Duc confirms the need for the relationship, "For education

---

[75]Martin Buber, I and Thou, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970) p. 178. A closeness which exists between some teachers and students is sexual in nature. This is nothing new but is receiving more attention today as an issue of sexual harassment. While I recognize these relationships as a type of closeness between teachers and students, they are really mutual friendships pushed to the extreme and are quite different from what I mean.

[76]Grant Showerman, "College Professors Exposed," Educational Review XXXVI (1910) p. 290.

is wholly a personal work. It is not gained by books, nor by instruction alone, nor by anything in place of the living inspiration of the living teacher."[77] Highet said, "Togetherness is the essence of teaching."[78] But, in spite of this, it seems as though a joining together of the interests of teachers and students was impossible or unnatural in many ways. Laurence Veysey said, "The academic experience held such different meanings for the students and instructors. . . Indeed, a warm recollection of shared social experiences comprised the strongest conscious impress of higher education in the minds of most degree holders."[79] Veysey was arguing that closeness between a teacher and students is a myth on an intellectual level, but not, perhaps, on an extracurricular level.

Woodrow Wilson, while president of Princeton, established what he called the preceptorial system. Wilson tried to induce a closeness between professors and their students and on an intellectual level. Wilson wrote, "It is a process of study which is meant to be a means not so much of instruction, as of intellectual development."[80]

---

[77]Thomas Le Duc, Piety And Intellect At Amherst College 1865-1912 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1946) p. 59.

[78]Gilbert Highet, The Art Of Teaching (New York: Vintage Books, 1950) p. 25.

[79]Laurence R. Veysey, The Emergence Of The American University (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965) pp. 276 & 294.

[80]Woodrow Wilson, "The Preceptorial System At Princeton,"* Educational Review XXXIX (1910) pp. 385, 386. *Princeton Annual Report, 1909.

Wilson, after five years of the preceptorial system, had this to say, "The system has accomplished no revolution in human nature."[81] It is important to have closeness between teachers and students, this is what teaching is all about. But it is not something that a system can create, it cannot be made to happen. It simply does or it does not happen as a set of particular relations.

Closeness has little to do with how much a teacher or student know about each other. One can learn from a teacher even though a student knows nothing about a teacher. A teacher and student don't even have to like each other for learning to take place, but if closeness and learning go hand in hand it will be difficult not to like each other.[82] Summed up, teaching is an important personal relationship between a teacher and student. Whatever else teaching is construed to be is peripheral to a particular set of relations between a teacher and student.

Can We Teach?

This appears to be a silly and moot question. Many of us are teaching now. Of course we can teach. We become qualified, or eligible, to teach in higher education the day we receive the Master's degree in our area of study. The third central question is really a

---

[81] Ibid., pp. 389, 390.

[82] My friend Lucy Nylund said, 'If I learn things from people they cannot be bastards.'

question of qualifications to teach. It is not at all a silly question and the answer is not simplistic either. To state the question differently; Does one really need a college degree to teach in higher education? To answer emphatically--NO--would be the antithesis of reason as we know it today. An unqualified no, to such an outward symbol of qualification, would be to attack that which is common sense in our world. To teach something one needs to know things about the something to be taught, i.e. one needs qualifications. We have to be clear about what qualifications are needed, and more importantly, what qualifications mean.[83] T. S. Eliot talks about poetry by saying, "I hold no diploma, certificate, or other academic document to show that I am qualified to discuss this subject."[84]

William James wrote a brilliantwork in 1903 called 'The Ph.D. Octopus'. James did a masterful job dealing with the question of qualifications. And yet, he was apparently ignored, not a thing has changed some eighty years later. James wrote this work in response

---

[83]A community college I am aware of was very concerned about its mission in the particular community where it was located. It was decided that to serve the community best the college could train those workers most needed, which happened to be carpenters, plumbers and electricians. Most of the plans were never implemented because an electrician with over twenty years of experience was not qualified to teach; the Master's degree was required.

[84]T. S. Eliot, "On Teaching The Appreciation of Poetry," Toward Liberal Education, ed. Louis G. Locke, et. al., op. cit., p. 369.

to what he thought was an over-reliant attitude on the Ph.D. degree. ". . . the quality per se of the man signified nothing . . . three magical letters were the thing seriously required."[85] James believed that teachers should be qualified, but he did not believe that the Ph.D. degree automatically provided one with qualifications. "Will anyone pretend for a moment that the doctor's degree is a guarantee that its possessor will be a successful teacher? Human nature is once and for all so childish that every reality becomes a sham somewhere, and in the minds of presidents and trustees the Ph.D. degree is in point of fact . . . but a sham, a bauble . . . whereby to decorate the catalogs of schools and colleges."[86]

In many areas the qualifications necessary to do a job have become formalized, certified, or professionalized. It is, indeed, an odd process. To protect ourselves and insure good work we establish standards of qualification. This is an appropriate and reasonable process to help insure ourselves against inadequate and inept performance. But something happens and the process of certification or professionalism takes on more and more significance in and of itself (much like the educational system). The process becomes more important than the people who are to become qualified. (Remember,

---

[85]William James, "The Ph.D. Octopus," Educational Review February 1918, p. 150.

[86]Ibid., pp. 151 & 153.

Taylor said this had to be.) David Schuman says, ". . . professionalism has changed. The shift, in a sense, is one from an interest in excellence to an interest in power."[87] There has been a shift. It is an odd and awful shift, but one that is real. To change Schuman's words slightly, it seems that professionalism has come between teaching and the teachers.[88] James said, "It seems to me high time to rouse ourselves to consciousness, and to cast a critical eye upon this grotesque tendency."[89]

We have already answered that we can teach. We have also raised questions about qualifications and professionalism. So much of what we know about these subjects is common sense in our world. Schuman says, "It is possible that our common sense is simply a social construction that is heavy on the common and light on the sense."[90] What is common to us has an amazing, even if unsaid, influence on us; upon who we are and how we behave in our world. Chapter II will explore the fourth central question, 'Are we doing a good job teaching?'. To fully understand this question it will be important to know more about those things which we hold in common.

---

[87]David Schuman, Bureaucracies, Organizations and Administration (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1976) p. 171.

[88]Ibid., p. 172.

[89]William James, "The Ph.D. Octopus," op. cit., p. 151.

[90]Schuman, op. cit., p. 98. Emphasis added.

CHAPTER II

ARE WE DOING A GOOD JOB TEACHING?

It is important to know about those things which we hold in common. As Vonnegut said, ". . . the big trouble was finding something to believe in."[1] Finding something to believe in becomes a task for each of us. It is difficult to project who we are (or even think about it) when we are so very content with what we are in our commonness. At the same time, we do not know much about the influence the common has on us.

Another Difficult Question

Recall that we have already thought about education, teaching and qualifications. The fourth central question is, 'Are we doing a good job teaching?'. Two simple words, 'good job', create a difficult path to wander. A 'job' is a role in our society and 'good' is a judgment of quality or excellence. Should the role be the determining factor in what is good or should our own judgment determine whether we are good in teaching?[2] It is easy to accept the fact that a role in society will dictate right action and appropriate behavior for us. We know this to be true. There are

---

[1]Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., Player Piano (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1952) p. 140.

[2]What is good is heavily determined by the role of a teacher in society--or at least the most pervasive influence on good will emanate from the commonness about us. It becomes that which we recognize as good.

expectations inherent in any particular role, such as a policeman, a fireman, etc. There are also expectations for teachers in higher education. It seems clear that most teachers in higher education have been able to meet these expectations. What we all have in common as teachers is that we have met the expectations of our role in society. And yet, we know that amongst the teachers in higher education there are good teachers and not-so-good teachers. A 'bad' teacher implies a certain amount of naughtiness, more than likely a failure to meet the expectations of the role. Those who fail to meet the expectations of their role are bad.

We have variations of good amongst those people who are teachers. We accept this as a fact and we don't worry too much about it. At the same time, it seems that academic deans would like to have the best teachers, or at least mostly good ones. An academic dean wants to evaluate teachers with the objective of having the best and doing away with those who are not-so-good.[3] Evaluation, then, is the issue of this study. Evaluation of teachers goes on all the time. Some of it is formal, although the vast majority is informal. Some of the evaluation is well thought out and some is not. What is clear is that evaluation goes on. It is influenced by what is common to us. We must focus, therefore, on the <u>influence of the common</u> as it relates to and affects evaluation of teachers in higher education.

---

[3]Retirement is usually considered a fine way to accomplish this, providing a dean can wait.

Liberalism

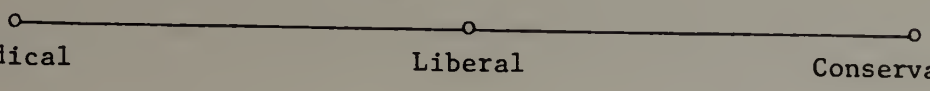
A book by Louis Hartz entitled The Liberal Tradition In America introduces us to a phenomenon called liberalism. The term is simply that, a term. But it helps us to identify another layer of understanding that entangles itself around us and around evaluations and judgments as to good or bad, right or wrong, etc. Hartz tacks this term of liberalism onto us, as Americans, as citizens of the United States. At times it seems as though Hartz levels stinging criticism against us. As much as this might hurt, it is incredibly enlightening. Hartz points at our very essence through liberalism.[4]

The first problem we have with liberalism is the term itself. In modern political thought we are familiar with the two opposite terms of conservative and liberal. A conservative is a person who is afraid to take a chance, mellow and reserved. A conservative wants to go back to a situation perceived as better. A liberal, on the other hand, is a person who takes many chances, is vocal, involved intimately with issues and intrepid. A liberal wants progress, perceived as moving forward (better). The terms denote two extremes. Hartz tells us about liberalism, but it is not at all what we would think of

---

[4]Sometimes it is difficult to pay close attention to someone who seems as though he is criticizing us directly, as Hartz does. It is especially disturbing as we watched the 52 Americans being released from their 444 day captivity in Iran. Watching the festivities on T.V. gives one a swelling feeling of pride to be an American. My guess is that the 52 former hostages may be struggling with the issue of liberalism in a more painful way than we are, however.

as liberal. Several times he uses the two opposing political terms of conservative and radical. He saves the term liberal for something in between. Radical certainly fits our notion of what a liberal is, in fact it is probably more accurate. If we placed the Hartz terms on a continuum they would look like this:



Hartz says that liberalism is a single factor and ". . . its effect is actually to balance distorted emphases. . . ."[5] This is quite different from our popular conception of liberal. Once we are able to turn our minds around to the terminology we are better able to understand Hartz and the effects of liberalism. Liberalism is difficult to comprehend for reasons other than terminology. "It has a quiet, matter of fact quality . . . the sense of the past is altered, and there is about it all . . . a vast and almost charming innocence of mind. There can be an appalling complexity to innocence. . . ."[6] Hartz helps us to see just how pervasive the notion of liberalism is in our society.

Hartz defines liberalism for us in many ways and explains some of the cultural phenomena surrounding it, which lends credence to what he says. Hartz says about liberalism, "It has within it, as it were, a

---

[5]Louis Hartz, The Liberal Tradition in America (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1955) p. 23.

[6]Ibid., p. 7.

kind of self-completing mechanism, which insures the universality of the liberal idea."[7] When Hartz uses words like universality, quiet, and matter of fact, they can also be used to describe what we mean by commonness (standardized, silent majority, etc.). Liberalism is part of this commonness. Hartz spends a great deal of time explaining the uniqueness of America for arriving at a political system without going through a class struggle or revolution. He says we have adopted the Lockian notions of rationalism. "Here is a Lockian doctrine which in the West as a whole is the symbol of rationalism, yet in America the devotion to it has been so irrational that it has not even been recognized for what it is: liberalism."[8]

An irrational adherence to rationalism? What is this thing called liberalism? "There has never been a 'liberal movement' or a real 'liberal party' in America: we have only had the American Way of Life. . . ."[9] Certainly one of the things we have in common is that we are American. Hartz appears to be making a point about our way of life. We have heard the critics say so often; 'yeh, we have our trouble in America, but it's still the best country in the world.' "Ironically, 'liberalism' is a stranger in the land of its greatest

---

[7]Ibid., p. 6. Emphasis added.

[8]Ibid., pp. 10, 11.

[9]Ibid., p. 11. Emphasis added.

realization and fulfillment."[10] We don't even recognize liberalism according to Hartz. There are reasons for this, that Hartz explains. It is clear, however, that liberalism is real, pervasive and, at the same time, evasive.

Hartz speaks of ". . . liberalism as a psychological whole, embracing the nation and inspiring unanimous decisions."[11] Liberalism is tied directly to our American way of life. Part of our way of life has been freedom and there is a unified attitude today with respect to that issue, i.e. most of us believe it is good. In 1980 we were concerned about the loss of freedom for 52 Americans in Iran. Most news reports indicate that the hostage issue, and their ultimate release, has had a unifying effect on the American people. "At the bottom of the American experience of freedom .. . there has always lain the inarticulate premise of conformity. . . ."[12]

If It Feels Good

We conform, then, to liberalism. Certainly this is a major part of what it is to be an American. Critics, Hartz tells us, sensed this and attacked this aspect of liberalism. Santayana wrote, "Even what is best in America is compulsory .. . the beautiful happy unison

---

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid., p. 14.

[12] Ibid., p. 57.

of its great moments."[13] This seems so much like a criticism, but it doesn't hurt us to feel unified with our fellow Americans. It's a nice feeling. Why do people criticize this? We have great difficulty understanding or recognizing liberalism simply because it feels so good. Who would want to argue with that which feels good? Frederick Taylor, the father of scientific management, said, "Life which is one continuous struggle with other men is hardly worth living."[14] Agreement on principles, hence a lack of struggle, makes one's life worthwhile? "Potentialities are everywhere, but instead of being developed, they are turned back upon themselves."[15] Hartz tells us that the potential for our own uniqueness is present, but it is turned back against itself. "Surely, then, it is a remarkable force: this fixed, dogmatic liberalism of a liberal way of life. It is the secret root from which have sprung many of the most puzzling of American cultural phenomena."[16] If we study some of the things that are most familiar to us, perhaps we can dig at the secret root of it all.

---

[13] Ibid.

[14] Frederick Winslow Taylor, The Principles of Scientific Management (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1967) p. 52.

[15] Hartz, op. cit., p. 97.

[16] Ibid., p. 9. Emphasis added.

We believe in American law. The courts are jammed with cases and every few months a major case is decided upon. At the point of a popular verdict we hear the parties involved say, 'This has restored my faith in American justice'. As Americans we do have faith in our law. Law seems to be cut and dried even though we do accept the fact that sharp lawyers can make odd twists in our laws. Basically, however, we believe that 'the law is the law'. Hartz says ". . . law has flourished on the corpse of philosophy in America, for the settlement of the ultimate moral question is the end of speculation upon it."[17] In other words, the law is the law so stop worrying about it. The law tells us what is right and wrong and that's that. We don't speculate much when someone confirms that American justice is served and reinforced. That's the way it's supposed to be. We don't spend much time pondering the fact that the statement we hear is really a reflection on all the usual injustice. This attitude results from education in America. The totalization process, the spiral, is set within the context of our culture. What, it appears, that we have learned well is liberalism as law. A right way to do things and a wrong way to do things is established by our law. It is a theme within our culture. In a personal centered spiral we have many times thought about the injustices. There is despair in us and potential to explore this injustice. But along comes the reinforcement of what is

---

[17]Ibid., p. 10.

deemed right. The potentiality is turned back on itself by the forces of an agreed-upon theme and a reinforcement of it.

Hartz tells us that law prevails over philosophy. Relating to what was just said about justice and injustice Hartz, quoting Albert Jay Nock, says, "The point is that in respect of the relation between theory and the actual practice of public affairs, the American is the most unphilosophic of beings. . . so long as he can listen to the pattern of litanies, no practical inconsistency disturbs him--indeed, he gives no evidence of even recognizing it as an inconsistency."[18] The pattern we listen to is the commonness and this is so familiar, so prevalent, so pervasive that we ignore the other developing potentialities or thoughts we have. "It is as if a thousand chamber of commerce epigoni suddenly appeared in the great tradition of American criticism, reducing insight to platitude, transforming philosophy into the complacent after-dinner speech."[19]

Hartz mentions an ethical problem with liberalism: ". . . the danger of unanimity, which has slumbered unconsciously behind (the majority). . . ."[20] We have, in essence, an unconscious unanimity.

---

[18]Ibid., p. 277.

[19]Ibid., p. 206.

[20]Ibid., p. 11. Parenthesis added.

Hartz calls it a fact, ". . . that a uniform liberalism does not see itself at all. . . ."[21] Apparently we conform and unify without realizing it most of the time. "The American way of life is. . . the American way of not philosophizing. . . ."[22] Why don't we philosophize? Hartz reminds us that we come from a nonfeudal society and that our battles are not a matter of life and death. Rather, our battles are ". . . forever dissolving into common agreements."[23] It is difficult, but not impossible, to philosophize when we are stifling thought through general agreement.

What philosophy is in America falls into several categories. It is looked at as being theoretical, not at all utilitarian. It falls into the category of unqualified learning to know, rather than learning to do something. Philosophy is also closely associated with intellectualism. Hartz says, ". . . the very term sounds alien of course in a liberal society. . . ."[24] In other words, a liberal society does not see philosophy as a dominant idea, or at least not a good dominant idea. Philosophy is a contradiction in a liberal society, indeed, it is a contradiction to conformity. As Americans

---

[21]Ibid., p. 26.

[22]Garry Wills, Nixon Agonistes (New York: New American Library, 1969), p. 509.

[23]Hartz, op. cit., p. 281.

[24]Ibid., p. 265.

we seem to hold philosophy, or learning to know, and intellectualism on a pedestal to be looked at, admired and possibly even aspired to. But that potential is quickly turned back upon itself by the good dominant ideas, i.e. through the reinforcement of the common.[25] "There will always be a dualism here. For the very Americans who tear the community apart when they think about politics at home are forever putting it back together again when they think about politics abroad."[26]

Hartz fills us in on this contradiction or dualism in the liberal society, which he says is ". . . best illustrated by the rugged individualism of the American farmer who is supported on all sides by the state. . ."[27] The dualism of wanting your children to receive a higher education and, at the same time, criticizing those who have the education is perplexing. We want to bring these notions into balance for ourselves. "Understandably, the common man wanted to protect his interests and use education to expand his social opportunities. . . ."[28]

---

[25]A dualism we have all probably heard before is people who criticize those who hold college degrees. The argument is that these people are probably very intelligent, but they have no common sense. These are the same people who, as parents, push their children to attend college.

[26]Hartz, op. cit., p. 81.

[27]Ibid., pp. 263, 264.

[28]Richard Hofstadter, Anti-Intellectualism In American Life (New York: Vintage Books, 1962) p. 154.

Anti-Intellectualism

We should understand what an impact anti-intellectualism has on us and our attitudes toward education. Richard Hofstadter tells us about people, ". . . calling the universities 'standing ponds of stinking waters', (or) 'When the word of God says one thing and scholarship says another, scholarship can go to hell!' (and) 'If we have to give up either religion or education, we should give up education.' "[29] That's quite an attitude. What we may miss in Hofstadter is the pervasive influence of liberalism; the underlying non-conformity of being an intellectual. "The word 'intellectual' became a synonym for the word 'bastard'. . . ."[30] Philosophy and intellectualism are not liberal notions, they are clearly radical.

Intellectual Liberals?

Hofstadter tells us that ". . . what is most remarkable is the general public acceptance of scholars in their advisory role."[31] The wine industry, for example, has its token advisors. In New York the industry looks toward the New York State Experimental Station in Geneva. And in California, the University of California at Davis is known for its expert advice and help to the industry. These examples

---

[29] Ibid., pp. 58, 122 & 129. Parentheses added.

[30] Ibid., p. 295.

[31] Ibid., p. 212.

show how the 'eggheads' can be advisors. But what are they sharing as advice? Philosophy? Intellectualism? No, they are sharing practical adaptations of their work. They are sharing useful ideas as advisors for utilitarian purposes. This is acceptable behavior for intellectuals and helps to reinforce their competency. To be able to apply your knowledge is to be competent; ". . . men began to be held together . . .by the knowledge that they were similar participants in a uniform way of life--by that 'pleasing uniformity of decent competence' . . . ."[32] This is one way liberalism affects the evaluation of teachers, i.e. teachers must be competent (qualified).

Hartz says, ". . . Richard Price glorified Americans because they were men of the 'middle state', men who managed to escape being 'savage' without becoming 'refined'."[33] We are forever ending up in the middle, balanced and comfortable.

We don't easily become upset as a group. One of the former hostages from Iran, upon returning to the United States, claims that he made it through all right because 'Americans are copers'. At the same time, we bungled a rescue attempt and lost eight lives. We also

---

[32]Hartz, op. cit., p. 55.

[33]Ibid., p. 51.

learn that some other hostages were going to break out of their captivity, even at the risk of death. The potentialities are all there. "Frustration produces the social passion, ease does not. A (comfortable) middle class . . . can take itself for granted."[34] Hofstadter also explains this balancing effect on intellectualism. ". . . one hears . . . that the intellectual . . . having won recognition . . . has lost his independence, even his identity as an intellectual. He becomes comfortable as . . . he . . . tailors himself to the requirements. . . ."[35] Vonnegut says it succintly, "The crowd had miraculously become a sort of homogenized pudding."[36] Wills addresses the same issue noting, ". . . strange harmony among intellectuals (in the 1950's). . . . There was an American consensus . . . to be super anything, it was decided, is un-American."[37] We now are able to identify some visible effects of liberalism on our daily lives and the strengths it develops when accepted in our society.

There are two important points to make clear. What is very outward and understandable about liberalism is: many elements of it are

---

[34]Ibid., pp. 51, 52. Parenthesis added.

[35]Hofstadter, op. cit., p. 416.

[36]Vonnegut, op. cit., p. 191.

[37]Wills, op. cit., pp. 507, 508. Parenthesis added.

radical and we seem to have an irrational attachment, ". . . a liberal society . . . shapes the outcome of the struggle. . . ."[38] Secondly, any thing or person that does not conform has an enormous and pervasive pressure to conform; ". . . the American liberal community contained far fewer radicals than any other Western society but the hysteria against them was much vaster than anywhere else."[39] It is difficult to see liberalism when we are part of the 'pudding'. It may be easier to understand liberalism when we are on the edge.

On The Edge

Kurt Vonnegut's Player Piano portrays American liberalism. To sum up his novel is to realize that all the characters end up in the same place, balanced, conforming. There was much despair and fighting amongst themselves, but ultimately everyone came back to the fold. It is startling to see a mass revolution against the machinery of society to be followed by the joy of rebuilding it immediately. A few examples may be useful.

We see a Paul Proteus fighting, on one side, an image of his father (who had succeeded) and, on the other, the frustration of succeeding the same way. We see Paul looking with favor upon an

---

[38]Hartz, op. cit., p. 18.

[39]Ibid., p. 300.

Ed Finnerty who essentially made it to a 'plum' Washington job and then quit. Finnerty went to a psychiatrist about his frustrations (a typical Ann Landers and Dear Abby approach today). Finnerty says about the psychiatrist, "He'd pull me back into the center, and I want to stay as close to the edge as I can without going over. Out on the edge you can see all kinds of things you can't see from the center. Big, undreamed-of things--the people on the edge see them first."[40] But Finnerty also felt the hysteria against being on the edge, to the point of almost committing suicide. Two men with potentialities in the form of frustrations, that's what Paul and Ed were. Paul never really quit and Ed never did commit suicide. Instead, after the (so called) revolution, they went back to the plant where they had both begun their careers and reminisced about the past. They returned to the good thoughts they used to have; the same thoughts that drove the people in Homestead to rebuild the machines they destroyed. Paul and Ed and all the characters had returned, they were comfortable again, balanced.

Vonnegut makes the lesson clearer with a story about a cat. The cat went over the edge, which was portrayed as an electrified fence. The end result was death. The pressure to conform seems to result in either conformity or death. Fred Garth, another character in the novel, destroyed the bark on a very symbolic tree and he was arrested.

---

[40]Vonnegut, op. cit., p. 86. Emphasis added.

"When the police had arrived on the island to pick him up, they'd caught the hysteria . . . and had treated Garth like one of the century's most terrible criminals."[41]

Success

We need to understand another common theme in America. This theme is sometimes termed the 'will to succeed'. We are all familiar with the stories of the poor person becoming rich. We believe in this, at least that it can happen. Wills quoting Richard Nixon says, " 'What we have to remember is that this country is going to be great in the future to the extent that individuals have self-respect, pride and a determination to do better.' To do better. There it is. Success is God. . . ."[42] Nixon was obviously frustrated in many ways, but the most frustration he experienced was to have believed in something, succeeded at it and then felt empty. What can this do to a person when they believe, succeed and then feel empty? We already know what it did to Richard Nixon. Wills says, "He knew that 1968 was a time when those who succeeded felt somehow cheated--forgotten, unrespected, mocked. They had believed in the morality of succeeding. And now the kids . . . the 'effete snobs' were denying them that honor."[43] We recognize the term 'effete snobs' from Richard Nixon's

---

[41]Ibid., p. 290.

[42]Wills, op. cit., p. 291.

[43]Ibid., pp. 287, 288.

Vice President, Spiro Agnew. Agnew actually called the youth of that era an 'effete corps of impudent snobs'.

The success and failure emphasis in America is a common liberal theme in our society. Agnew told America, "It is not unusual, nor should it be distressing, that individuals of monumental ego among the failures of our society should attack everything fundamental to our free culture. . . ."[44] Hartz says, "But in the world of Horatio Alger . . . 'success' and 'failure' became the only valid ways of thought. . . ."[45] Horatio Alger helped perpetuate and instill in us the will to succeed. He gave us all the hope, and set up a competitive race. There will always be people who are not as energetic as others. You are deemed to be lazy, however, if you do not want to succeed. It is an American trait to be in the race, to be striving for success. Hartz says, ". . . the chance to become successful was made equal. . . ."[46]

Success as a liberal notion is clear. "Equality . . . means that people are equal in their right to compete for success . . . Equality does not mean that if someone does not compete, society

---

[44]Spiro Agnew, taken from a record album entitled "Spiro T. Agnew Speaks Out" PRM - 316, Side 1, cut 1 - The Greatest Issue In America Today. Emphasis added.

[45]Hartz, op. cit., p. 219. "Horatio Alger (1834-1899) was an American author who wrote a famous series of books for boys. His stories . . . deal with penniless heroes who gain success by goodness and courage.", taken from The World Book Encyclopedia Vol. 1 (Chicago: Field Enterprises Educational Corporation, 1958) p. 224.

[46]Ibid., pp. 219, 220.

has an obligation to help that person. Freedom means that each person has the right to choose whether to compete or not. Justice means the existence of equality and freedom as here defined."[47] We do not have to join the race, but society is under no obligation to us as human beings unless we do join the race as competitors. Hartz relays the same message, ". . . within the American world itself there was no escape from the race even for those who won it, and any attempt to escape . . . (was) outside the American ethos."[48] We have in common a will to succeed. We are all in the race with various degrees of commitment, but we are in the race. "Thus there was no escape from 'failure' save in the eternal effort to become a 'success'."[49] Hartz also tells us, "Once again we are back at the ancient American problem of liberal uniformity, far more striking now . . . ."[50]

While success is a liberal notion the major emphasis is on striving rather than success. If you succeed you lose your commonness with those who are still striving. You are no longer striving, therefore you are no longer conforming. You are upsetting the balance. This is an example of our irrational approach to rationalism. It is

---

[47]James W. Evans, Ph.D., "Equality & Freedom In America--Two Views of Justice," University of San Diego--School of Business Administration Newsletter, Autumn, 1980/Volume 4, Number 1, p. 1.

[48]Hartz, op. cit., p. 221.

[49]Ibid., p. 224.

[50]Ibid., p. 225.

rational to believe that we are striving for success and that we may reach it. But, at the same time, we accept the fact that those who do succeed should continue to strive. The Whigs, Hartz tells us, helped to perpetuate a Lockian 'Americanism', but the strong willed Progressive fell victim to it. "Far from inheriting the earth, all he wanted to do was to smash trusts and begin running the Lockian race all over again."[51]

Hartz mentioned earlier that liberalism has an innocence about it and that innocence has an appalling complexity. Part of the complexity is concerned with where an individual happens to fit into the scheme of things. It is probably appalling based on its deceptiveness, evasiveness or irrationalism. Hartz says, "Now a sense of community based on a sense of uniformity is a deceptive thing. It looks individualistic, and in part it actually is. It cannot tolerate internal relationships of disparity, and hence can easily inspire the kind of advice that Professor Nettels once imagined a colonial farmer giving his son: 'Remember that you are as good as any man--and also that you are no better'. But in another sense it is profoundly anti-individualistic, because the common standard is its very essence, and deviations from that standard inspire it with

---

[51]Ibid., p. 223.

an irrational fright."[52] Wills calls this, ". . . the formula for resentment in America--the conflict between deference and competitiveness, both imposed as duties. Our individualism is both emulative (you should 'best' the next man) and egalitarian (without being better than the next man). One must achieve, yet remain common; excel, yet pretend not to . . . believing it excessively presuming in an American to pretend to be different from his fellow citizens."[53]

Are We Trying?

In answering the question, 'Are we doing a good job teaching?', we have to understand the criteria for judging. Good teaching, as set in the spiral of our culture, is based on whether or not we strive to be a good teacher. Those teachers who are successful teachers and those who do not strive to be successful will be heavily criticized. It is not whether you are very good or very bad as a teacher, it is whether or not you are trying to be a good teacher. Common themes in our culture, liberalism, and our American way of life have an influence on how teachers are evaluated.

---

[52]Ibid., p. 56. This reminds me of President Carter giving his farewell address to the nation in January, 1981. His parting words were stressing the need for all individuals to unite for the common good and he said, ". . . so fellow citizens, farewell." Jimmy Carter is as good as us, but no better!?

[53]Wills, op. cit., p. 145.

We can easily understand the dilemma of an academic dean who is supposed to evaluate teachers. Deans complain that the evaluation of teachers is to be based on their teaching, but there is no objective criteria available for this judgment. There is, actually, only one objective criteria available. It is the common symbol; it is qualifications, credentials. Once we become a teacher based on a set of qualifications, then the liberal notion of competence becomes the only objective criteria. "The pretense . . . that a teacher is supposedly judged only by his competence in his field. (Teachers) must be found to be, not wrong, but 'incompetent'. And teachers who are socially or politically unacceptable to their fellows . . . must also be declared incompetent. That category . . . is . . . the only academic sin. . . ."[54] Not only do we have objective criteria; it becomes a liberal absolute, much the way striving for success does.

The common standard is significant in the evaluation of teachers. "George Kennan has spoken of 'our inveterate tendency to judge others by the extent to which they contrive to be like ourselves'."[55] This is part of the reason that whenever the topic of teacher evaluation arises the quick response is to set up some kind of standardized evaluation. We have all heard the responses leading to this. 'There must be a way; we ought to be able to set up a standardized system; it won't be perfect but at least it will be fair, i.e. everyone

---

[54]Ibid., p. 322. Parenthesis added.

[55]Hartz, op. cit., p. 302.

will be judged by the same criteria and you will know where you stand'. "It is only when you take your ethics for granted that all problems emerge as problems of technique."[56] The technique of standardization, as well as the common standard, derives itself from liberalism in America. A college or university, Wills tells us, has been part of our political scene and its procedures and, ". . . the university appeared to be the living example of the integration of liberalism . . . ."[57] Technique, as well as standards, perpetuate liberal notions. Once we standardize evaluations, or set up some kind of a system, ". . . an evaluation ceases to be purely 'judgmental' . . . (it) becomes a guarantee that objective evidence and professional standards will be the basis for reappointment."[58]

To summarize, we are concerned with liberalism and its affect on us. Liberalism is a many faceted notion. It is not a simple term to define, identify, or understand. Liberalism appears to be a cultural and societal phenomenon. It is a cultural state of mind which has the effect of balancing two extreme political positions, that of conservative and radical. Liberalism is a force which gives rise to common themes within our culture-based spiral. We seem to become attached to liberalism in ways that lack all rational

---

[56]Ibid., p. 10.

[57]Wills, op. cit., p. 325.

[58]Paul Strohm, "Toward an AAUP Policy on Evaluation of Administrators," Academe (Washington, D.C.: The American Association of University Professors, December 1980) p. 408.

justification. We attach ourselves to laws, utilitarian (rather than philosophical) purposes, complex dualisms and a will to succeed or strive for success--all this is a part of our common sense. These are just a few of the common themes which have clear effects on education in general, and the evaluation of teachers in particular.

How Others Tell Us To Judge

Specific studies about the evaluation of faculty in higher education find the authors generally developing their studies by reviewing and commenting upon other studies. In addition, the selected and annotated bibliographies simply indicate the extent to which everyone reviews everyone else's work. There is not one study or set of studies that can be called the best or the one to which we could all adhere. Almost exclusively, it appears, the literature involved in the evaluation of teachers is affected by liberalism. As a result, the questions and issues raised become exercises in whose technique is better, or whose checklist is most inclusive or suitable.

Patricia McCormack, as the United Press International Education Editor, tell us how to judge a good teacher. Actually, her article addresses how to spot a great teacher. McCormack says, "The great teacher stands above the rest. . . ."[59] If we understand the

---

[59]Patricia McCormack, "How To Spot A Great Teacher," The Daily News (Springfield, Massachusetts: The Springfield Newspapers, July 22, 1980) p. 9.

effects of liberalism, then we understand that the great teacher will be criticized for standing above the rest. McCormack goes on to answer the question of what a great teacher is by saying, "What they have in common are interior qualities, many of which have been identified in more than 400 'great teacher' studies over the last 25 years."[60] She then provides us with a checklist of qualities possessed by great teachers. This is a shortened version of the checklist, "Great teachers believe . . . I . . . can help . . . they look upon teaching as the focus of their lives . . . listen to both sides . . . read and collect things . . . derive satisfaction from their investment in their work (striving) . . . balance organization with flexibility . . . are 'with it' . . . believe their students will succeed. . . ."[61] The checklist is only meaningful as an extension of our commonness. In some ways the checklist is obscure and unclear. McCormack tells us that a great teacher is one who reinforces that which we hold in common. A great teacher, once spotted, is a reinforcement of that which is common sense to us. Great teaching is great teaching (just as the law is the law) and spotting it brings us into balance. It is important to realize that all we have done is to spot a great teacher of liberalism.

---

[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid., parenthesis added.

It was interesting to uncover an author who had looked at the literature of faculty evaluation in despair. There was potential emerging in the words of Warren Seibert when he said, "Witness, for example, the article by Kossoff (1971-72) which contends that attempts to rate the quality of instruction and to develop meaningful statistics from ratings constitute a form of ersatz science. There have been hundreds of studies, reviews, and other entries into the literature of the field. . . ."[62] Seibert further said, ". . . effective teaching remains an inviting and worthy phenomenon to study, especially if one has stamina and a high tolerance for frustration."[63] But notice, these are not words of despair. The potentialities are turned back upon themselves. Tolerance for frustration is a balancing process; a process with which we are now quite familiar.

Two authors are mentioned frequently as being the best in the area of faculty evaluations: McKeachie and Eble. Kenneth Eble starts out one of his books by saying, "Just how good college teaching is throughout the country and how good it should be are two questions which have no exact answers."[64] But Eble did not believe himself because he proceeded to write with the goal of trying to

---

[62] Support for Teaching At Major Universities, ed. Stanford C. Ericksen (Ann Arbor, Michigan: The University of Michigan, 1979) "Student Evaluations of Instruction" by Warren F. Seibert, p. 68.

[63] Ibid., p. 84.

[64] Kenneth E. Eble, The Recognition and Evaluation of Teaching (Washington, D.C.: The American Association of University Professors, 1971) p. 1.

provide some answers, no matter how tentative they might be. Eble restates his point and says, "No one knows how good or how bad college teaching is. This project proceeds from the general premise that almost everything needs improving . . . teaching today is in need of forceful and continuing attention."[65] We don't have to worry about the fact that there are no answers about good teaching. Why worry when the real concern is the liberal notion of striving? 'Almost everything needs improving' clearly sets up the importance of the race and the continuing attention to teaching helps us understand striving to be a good teacher as more important than being a good teacher.

Eble further states his objectives by saying, "The intention of this monograph is to provide materials useful to refining the procedures by which teaching is evaluated in itself and as a part of the professor's total competence."[66] Now it is complete. The only objective criteria by which to judge is the teacher's competence. Eble's work was actually a review of many other studies and does not stun us when he says, "The extensive bibliography accompanying this monograph surveys . . . evaluation of . . . teaching . . . (and) the investigations are not at variance, and . . . provide reasonably consistent answers."[67] There is a consistency in the literature. In

---

[65]Ibid., p. 2. Emphasis added.

[66]Ibid., pp. 5, 6.

[67]Ibid., p. 9. Parenthesis added.

fact, the consistency is that as teachers we should strive to become better teachers.

Evaluate By Equation

There are many techniques or methods for being a great teacher. "The general qualities which distinguish the superior teacher have been set down by almost every teacher with a keen interest in teaching. Julius Taylor, head of the Physics department at Morgan State, puts it in the form of an equation: C1 + C2 + C3 + E = Effective Teaching, where C1 = Competence, C2 = Concern or Comparison, C3 = Commitment, and E = Enthusiasm."[68] But how do we define and understand all these variables? How do we utilize all the various criteria established by so many teachers? ". . . such variables are best perceived as diverse personal manifestations of commonly agreed-upon qualities."[69]

Liberal notions tie good teachers and their race (striving) toward good teaching together. As a result it is not surprising to learn that "The extensive research on student questionnaires for rating classroom performance has a high degree of uniformity."[70] We are consistent in our belief that we should be striving toward being

---

[68] Ibid.

[69] Ibid., emphasis added. Inherent in an equation is that the quantities to the left and to the right of the equal sign must be the same. This is not a natural situation, this is forced sameness, much the same way accountants 'plug' figures to provide the balance sheet.

[70] Ibid., emphasis added.

a good teacher. In fact we agree that the constant striving is important in the judgment of 'good' and we have to keep abreast of the new techniques for being effective. This is probably why any particular method of faculty evaluation spreads across college campuses with an amazing swiftness.

"It is Socratic wisdom that the mark of the knowing teacher is that he knows very little. Of the teaching process itself, he may only know that he must be constantly ready to drop old strategies and adopt new ones."[71] This seems quite different from the picture Wills painted, "Thus there was equality in the sphere of ideas. . . . The student . . . proclaims . . . that he does not know; the teacher is accredited as one who does know. . . ."[72] But it isn't different. Wills describes knowing as competence and we all understand that a teacher must be competent. What Eble is describing in the first quotation is competence in teaching technique, not competence of a subject matter. Eble says that it is important to ". . . emphasize the necessity of feedback of some continuing kind if the teacher is to . . . improve upon his teaching skill."[73]

---

[71]Ibid., p. 8.

[72]Wills, op. cit., p. 323.

[73]Eble, op. cit., p. 34.

It all seems so right, this notion of continuous improvement. This is why we attend professional meetings and stay current in our fields. Eble quotes from a report of the University of California at Davis, "Our objective is to contribute to the improvement of teaching at the university by characterizing effective performance. . . ."[74] If there is any single argument in favor of formalized and standardized faculty evaluations it has been improving teaching. "If evaluation can contribute to bringing the campus together in the common teaching-learning enterprise . . . if it can work specific improvements upon individuals . . . if it can add to what we know about teaching . . . then it is surely worth the risks. . . ."[75] This is the first we have heard about risks.

Risks of Evaluation

Richard Miller confirms what we have learned when he says, "Professional improvement should be the primary objective of any faculty evaluation procedure. . . ."[76] But he goes on and begins to help us understand what Eble was alluding to as risk in faculty evaluations. "We live in social contexts and we are judged according

---

[74]Ibid., p. 90.

[75]Ibid., p. 49.

[76]Richard I. Miller, Evaluating Faculty Performance (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1972) p. 8.

to some standard and by someone. In an age of science, the 'art' of teaching must be respected, but the 'science' of pedagogy is becoming more sensitive, adaptable and precise."[77] Miller explains that evaluation goes on all the time, but the standards of judgment are not clear. More and more, however, we are moving toward precision in identifying and measuring these standards. Miller moves us directly into a risk of faculty evaluation--standardization and a loss of the art of teaching. If we are to be precise about our standards of judgment then we have to create uniform standards. The precision of evaluation is a liberal notion and has the effect of bringing judgments into a known and uniform balance. In essence, judgment as we know it is removed and is replaced by precise standards. The science of faculty evaluation and the science of pedagogy is standardization.

We can understand some of the risks involved in standardization from Frederick Taylor when he said, ". . . every single act of every workman can be reduced to a science . . . there is always one method . . . which is . . . better than any of the rest. . . . The development of a science . . . involves the establishment of many rules, laws, formulae which replace the judgment of the individual. . . ."[78] All we have to do is develop a system for faculty evaluation and

---

[77] Ibid., p. 74.

[78] Taylor, op. cit., pp. 64, 25 & 37.

then we don't have to worry about how we are judged or how we do the judging. It is all prescribed. Miller laments to us that we are not yet systemized enough. "Although private self-evaluation is more or less continuous, even if haphazard, systematic and planned self-evaluation is rare."[79]

A scientist, Lewis Thomas, comments on the systemizing of things. "It goes somehow against the grain to learn that cost-benefit analyses can be done neatly on lakes, meadows, nesting gannets, even whole oceans. Even the . . . jargon is disturbing: it hurts the spirit, somehow. . . ."[80]

More About How To Judge

"(Kulik & McKeachie, 1975; Wittrock & Lumsdaine, 1977) found little relationship between student rated teaching effectiveness and such teacher variables as knowledge, ability . . . or scholarly traits. . . ."[81] There are many findings such as this. "Granzin and Painter (1973) . . . concluded that jokes, theatrics, and simply well-chosen materials and well-delivered lectures are of

---

[79]Miller, op. cit., p. 35.

[80]Lewis Thomas, The Lives of a Cell (Toronto: Bantam Books, Inc., 1974) p. 121.

[81]Theodore A. Chandler, "The Questionable Status of Student Evaluations of Teaching," Teaching of Psychology, Vol. 5, No. 3., October, 1978, p. 150.

major importance in achieving high course ratings. . . ."[82] Also mentioned many times is the Dr. Fox effect. A group of researchers (Naftulin, Ware & Donnelly, 1973) used an actor to deliver prepared materials to students. Dr. Fox was rated very highly, not only by students, but by allegedly sophisticated educators. "The researchers concluded that style was more critical than substance in attaining high student ratings. . . ."[83]

Regardless of the research or researchers, most studies conclude with some affirmation toward improvement of teaching. But, ". . . certain dimensions of teaching effectiveness consistently emerge. These dimensions include 'Knowledge', 'Presentation', 'Organization', 'Consideration', and 'Enthusiasm'; these appear to be common. . . ."[84] Eble also said ". . . 4 to 5 particular scales (i.e. knowledge, presentation, relation with students, enthusiasm) appear rather consistently. . . ."[85] Although several criteria appear often, many studies indicate varied criteria. "A form worked out by Wilbert McKeachie and published in the AAUP Bulletin (Winter, 1969), contains 17 items on the teacher. . . . A very recent study at the University of California at Davis, (is) based on analysis of

---

[82]Ibid. [83]Ibid.

[84]"Evaluating Instruction: Learning/Perceptions," prepared by the Learning Research Center of the University of Tennessee, No. 16, Spring, 1971, p. 10.

[85]Eble, op. cit., p. 95.

85 items. . . ."[86]

When we speak of evaluation of faculty in higher education we usually lean toward that universal, scientifically produced measurement. If we intend to evaluate something then we must set up the mechanism to reach our objectives. A mechanism that is easy is a universal or standardized tool that will allow us to measure a goal or intended outcome. Evaluation is easily mechanized. "America simply teems with mechanical inventions, because nobody in America ever wants to do anything. They are idealists. Let a machine do the doing."[87]

Standardized evaluation forms provide us with an interesting ideal teacher. In fact, we find out quickly that there are as many ideal teachers as there are standardized evaluation forms. To find a single ideal or standard is impossible, yet we believe we can find the ideal (a form) and create a standard by which to judge teachers. Vonnegut said it this way, ". . . nothing of value changed; that what was once true is always true; that truths were few and simple; and that a man needed no knowledge beyond these truths to deal wisely

---

[86]Ibid., p. 22. Parenthesis added.

[87]D. H. Lawrence, Studies in Classic American Literature (New York: Penquin Books, Ltd., 1961) p. 38.

and justly with any problem whatsoever."[88]

What is wrong with our faith in a standardized faculty evaluation form is that we are looking for an absolute measurement. "Thus, what is wrong with the liberal tradition is not its liberal content but the fact that it *is* a tradition, that it forms 'a colossal liberal absolutism'. The theory is everywhere, made invisible by its omnipresence."[89]

What Happens To Teachers?

When we attempt to find the absolute, ideal teacher, we do so in a uniform way by means of standardized measurement. But there is an additional risk. That risk is one of *standardizing the teachers*, in addition to the method of judgment. Using the liberal notions of uniformity, consistency, standards, absolutes, ideals, etc. we tend to homogenize teachers through the striving process. ". . . there should be a high correlation between the *average* class grade and the *average* rating of the instructor."[90]

---

[88]Vonnegut, op. cit., pp. 122, 123. I once took a standardized student evaluation form being used and translated the questions into another form that began, 'Our ideal teacher would. . . .' This was presented to the administrators of the form and they immediately found fault after fault with 'my' ideal teacher. When confronted with the truth some were quite angry with me.

[89]Wills, op. cit., p. 510.

[90]Learning Research Center of the University of Tennessee, op. cit., p. 6. John A. Centra, from Educational Testing Service in Princeton, New Jersey, spoke to our college faculty concerning faculty evaluations. Centra has released a new book called *Determining Faculty*

Deans are concerned about teachers who receive low ratings from students. They also look at those people who receive very high ratings. Of course, what isn't said is that little attention is paid to those teachers who receive average ratings, between the very high and the very low. The lesson is clear. The standards are such that a teacher who is out of balance (above or below the average) is looked at with discerning eye. The result is also clear. Standardized evaluations and measurements result in encouraging all teachers to perform in a consistent, uniform manner. Good is a measurement of our commonness, not our uniqueness. Good is average![91]

If we were to ask ourselves whether we are good teachers, the appropriate measurement would be one of whether or not we are within the norm. After all, what's good is good, ". . . the businessmen whose credo is 'Business is business' and the statesmen who hold

---

Effectiveness. One chart Centra displayed showed us that as a teacher gains experience teaching their ratings by students improve, up to 12 years and then they fall off slightly. The chart indicated that N = 14,400 students. The rating scale was from 1 to 5 with 1 being the worst and 5 being the best. All the ratings on this particular chart were in the 3.4 to 3.8 range, which means that every teacher received slightly above average ratings. The teachers were literally all rated the same. When this was pointed out to Centra he responded by saying, "Well, we took the mean of the means for this chart."

[91]Much of this comes from my experience as an administrator and in speaking with deans. I spoke with a student recently who told me an awful story. It seems this student wrote an English paper that the teacher thought was very good. But the teacher said to the student, 'This isn't typical of the average college student' and assigned a grade of 'C' (average).

with 'War is war' are aestheticizing literati in the 'value vacuum'. They are aesthetes insofar as they are enchanted by the consonance of their own system, and they become murderers because they are prepared to sacrifice everything to this consonance, this 'beautiful' consistency."[92] The beauty of life in America is a liberal notion.

McKeachie's most influential work in faculty evaluation was in 1969. Ten years after his report he asked, "Do Student Ratings Measure Teacher Effectiveness? There is now a good deal of evidence supporting a positive answer to our question, but it has also become evident that the question is overly simple."[93] McKeachie then goes into a lengthy discussion of what he believes to be teaching effectiveness. He ends his newest work with, "We use ratings to improve the quality of education."[94]

Quality

Quality in education, quality in teaching or just plain quality deserves our attention. Quality as a liberal notion too quickly becomes translated into average. Issues of competence and effectiveness in teaching revolve around qualified learning to know and

---

[92]Hannah Arendt, Men In Dark Times (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1955-1968) pp. 122, 123.

[93]Wilbert McKeachie, "Student Ratings of Faculty: A Reprise," Academe (Washington, D.C.: The American Association of University Professors, October, 1979) p. 384.

[94]Ibid., p. 396.

learning to do something. The whole dimension of unqualified learning to know is absent from faculty evaluations and thoughts of good teaching. This is not surprising given the anti-intellectualism we exhibit. But from an educator's point of view, it would seem that some kind of intellectual challenge for students should be an integral part of good teaching and education.

Zigli and Patton attempt to define an ideal teacher of business and compare this against other ideals (Tables 1 & 2 on pages 89 and 90 respectively). It is dismaying to see no mention of intellectual challenge, except in the works of Marks and Molander (Table 2). The ideal as a liberal notion is clearly and overwhelmingly shown through professional competence and qualifications in Table 1.[95]

Part of the ease of slipping into a standardized evaluation of faculty is the presence of categories which allow comparison. "In his extensive research on teacher effectiveness Ryan finds three prominent patterns of observable classroom behavior or behaving styles: 'Pattern X - friendly, understanding, sympathetic teacher behavior; Pattern Y - responsible, businesslike, systematic teacher behavior; Pattern Z - stimulating, imaginative teacher behavior'. . . ."[96] Categories make an evaluation technique easy

---

[95]Ronald M. Zigli and Wesley E. Patton, III, "Matching Business Faculty to Student Desires. . . ." Collegiate News & Views (Cincinnati: South-West Publishing, Winter 1980-81) pp. 7-11.

[96]Miller, op. cit., p. 24. I can see myself fitting all these patterns at one point or another, perhaps all of them in the same class period.

TABLE 1

SALIENT DIMENSIONS OF THE IDEAL PROFESSOR OF BUSINESS (IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE)

Factor Number	Description	Average Weighted Index
1	Professionally competent and qualified (formal recognition or certification) in his/her field	143.5
2	Current and enthusiastic about his/her field	36.8
3	Willing to try new and innovative techniques or methods of teaching	23.00
4	Sensitive and effective communicator in the classroom	13.75
5	Equitable in classroom administration	12.00
6	Clear and understandable tests and class presentations	8.75
7	Students oriented and empathetic to their problems	7.11
8	Aritculate and interesting demeanor in classroom	5.55
9	Equity in test content and administration	3.46

SOURCE (Refer to Footnote 95)

TABLE 2

SALIENT DIMENSIONS OF BUSINESS
PROFESSORS FROM SELECTED RESEARCH

Rank*	Lein and Merz	Marks and Molander	Seaton and Vogel
1	Ability to teach	Instructor enthusiasm	Classroom format and style
2	Personality	Intellectual challenge	Grading
3	Sensitivity	Likability	Education and Experience
4	Knowledge of discipline	Interesting style	Teacher style
5	Professional and academic achievement	Well organized	Workload
6	Practical experience	Instructor knowledge	
7	Innovative teacher	Instructor preparation	
8	Fair grading	Discussion of current topics	
9	Openmindedness		

*Dimensions are ranked in order of importance

SOURCE (Refer to Footnote 95)

to administer and standardize. "No one before Aristotle had used in any other sense but accusation the word kategoria (category), signifying what was asserted in court procedures about the defendant. In Aristotelian usage this word became something like 'predicate', . . . the predicate (category) hands down the appropriate quality to the subject."[97]

Do Something About Liberalism

It seems to me that we really have to do something about liberalism, and categories. It is futile to pursue the same paths as others who have written extensively in the area of faculty evaluation.[98] We have already seen that the process of evaluation is to look at those teachers that have very low and very high scores on standardized evaluations. The purpose of looking is not to fire the worst or reward the best; the purpose is to move those who are out of balance back into balance. In fact, most merit pay will be assigned to those teachers who are not out of balance--remember, average is best. Not many people will admit this, but techniques are developed and implemented around this liberal notion.

---

[97]Hannah Arendt, The Life of the Mind - Volume One - Thinking (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971) p. 105. I emphasize accusation because evaluation of faculty takes on a special significance when a dean wishes to criticize a faculty member.

[98]My friend Peter Eddy indicates that anyone can walk onto any college campus in this country and, within a short period of time, know who is considered to be a good teacher and who isn't. Peter's answer to the deans is this: 'fire the worst five teachers and reward the hell out of the best five'.

So, we must do something about liberalism. ". . . it is not to disparage liberalism to say that a knowledge of it and nothing else can produce an absolute temper of mind that in the end is self-defeating."[99] To understand faculty evaluation as a liberal notion and then study evaluation technique is wrong, ". . . instead of recapturing our past, we have got to transcend it."[100]

The formal techniques of faculty evaluations, as we know them today, are wrong-headed. The techniques are not wrong in and of themselves and to say that a teacher should not be competent or effective would be silly. Of course those categories are important; they are simply the wrong things to consider when we are talking about the evaluation of faculty or whether we are doing a good job teaching. "Hence the question is not whether our history has given us something to 'export' but whether it has given us the right thing. And this question has to be answered in the negative. If we want to meet the action . . . our job . . . is to transcend the perspective it contains."[101]

Fantasy Is Not Fanatical

This sounds easy enough--transcend the perspective (liberalism) it contains.

---

[99] Hartz, op. cit., pp. 175, 176.

[100] Ibid., p. 32.

[101] Ibid., p. 305.

Then we capture a new or clearer look at education, teaching and evaluation. Revolving a study around questions does not give us definitive answers to those questions. We better understand what it is we are talking about, but in most instances we are still searching for even better questions to pose and study. Liberalism, on the other hand, gives us answers of process and technique and we find comfort in those answers. Much of the transcending, once spoken, may seem like so much fantasy. Many of the answers may seem more mystical than concrete. Liberalism, however, is also quite mystical. Hartz tells us that ". . . fantasy may serve a curious purpose for the American political mind, for it may well be the only technique whereby it can seize any kind of perspective other than the liberal perspective which has governed it throughout its history."[102] Therefore, we should fantasize, in a positive sense, and pose more questions. We can call all the answers about education, teaching and evaluation two things; one is liberal and the other, because of the first, fanatical in a negative sense.

Robert Pirsig tells us that liberal notions are in doubt. We, in higher education, are fanatically dedicated to faculty evaluations of teaching and the quality of some standard of performance. Pirsig says, "When people are fanatically dedicated to . . . dogmas or goals,

---

[102]Ibid., p. 175.

it's always because these . . . are in doubt."[103] It is wrong to continue to perpetuate the liberal notions in education, teaching and evaluation; ". . . the tendency to do what is 'reasonable' even when it isn't any good."[104]

Other Measures

"If one really wishes to be master of an art, technical knowledge of it is not enough. One has to transcend technique so that the art becomes an 'artless art' growing out of the Unconscious."[105] Herrigel tells us three important things. The first is that there are other measures; the second is that those measures require us to go beyond technique, beyond a system of measurement. The third is that we need, in our education, more than learning to do something and qualified learning to know. Herrigel relates his own story of trying to learn how to master the art of archery under an Eastern Master. He shows us his confusions with the Master and how our common measures become all mixed up. Herrigel assumed that his goal would be achievable. He was frustrated after four years of study.

---

[103] Robert M. Pirsig, Zen And The Art Of Motorcycle Maintenance (New York: Bantam Books, 1974) p. 146. It should be noted that I am clearly against standardized evaluations of performance, in spite of their ease of use. However, they do tend to help us discover those teachers who do a very poor job. Also, if a teacher uses a standardized evaluation form and feels good about the feedback, that cannot be considered bad.

[104] Ibid., p. 352. Emphasis in the original.

[105] Eugen Herrigel, Zen In The Art Of Archery, trans. R. F. C. Hull (New York: Vintage Books, 1971) p. vi. of the introduction.

But the Master said, "The way to the goal is not to be measured!"[106] Sometimes these other measures are not as comfortable as the liberal notions we are used to. "He who has a hundred miles to walk should reckon ninety as half the journey."[107] When we hear this we are not at all comfortable.

When Herrigel is leaving his Master, after six years, the Master tells him, "Perhaps you have hardly noticed it yet, but . . . things will no longer harmonize as before. You will . . . measure with other measures."[108] We need to carefully explore the measure of quality. "Quality . . . you know what it is, yet you don't know what it is. But some things <u>are</u> better than others . . . . But when you try to say what the quality is, apart from the things that have it, it all goes <u>poof</u>! If no one knows what it is, then for all practical purposes it doesn't exist at all. But for all practical purposes it really <u>does</u> exist."[109] This will not be an easy, quick, comfortable or standardized measure.

Quality As A Measure

We seem to be able to recognize quality. Administrators ask students in higher education to help them recognize quality teaching,

---

[106] Ibid., p. 58.

[107] Ibid., p. 61.

[108] Ibid., p. 74.

[109] Pirsig, op. cit., p. 178.

". . . the Academic Affairs Committee of the Trustees commented that they believed student evaluation to be 'critically important input in judging the teaching effectiveness of members of the faculty'."[110] And students believe that they have a special ability to be able to do this by way of standardized evaluations. The twist comes when a teacher expects the students to do quality work in a particular subject matter. Pirsig tells us about one of his English classes. "'How are we supposed to know what quality is?' they said, 'You're supposed to tell us!' Then he told them he couldn't figure it out either and really wanted to know. He had assigned it in the hope that somebody would come up with a good answer. That ignited it. A roar of indignation shook the room. Before the commotion had settled down another teacher had stuck his head in the door to see what the trouble was. 'It's all right', (he said), We just accidentally stumbled over a genuine question and the shock is hard to recover from'."[111] Certainly wanting to know good teaching is a genuine question. But the current measurements are more an exercise to go through rather than a genuine search for it. "You were supposed to fake this search for truth, to imitate it. To actually search for it was a damned imposition."[112]

---

[110] Agenda, Faculty Senate of Western New England College, Springfield, Massachusetts 3/2/81, p.2.

[111] Pirsig, op. cit., p. 199. Parenthesis added.

[112] Ibid.

After the experience with his class Pirsig tried to write a definition of quality. "Quality is a characteristic of thought and statement that is recognized by a non-thinking process. Because definitions are a product of rigid, formal thinking, Quality cannot be defined. But even though Quality cannot be defined, you know what Quality is!"[113] Pirsig went on to show the students that they could recognize quality. He read a few papers to them and had them react. We could also run the same exercise here. We could set down scenarios of two or three teachers and we would be able to react to their quality. But, once we looked at a quality teacher we would try to identify what actions we believed caused that quality. Then, to become quality teachers, we would try to copy or imitate those actions. Pirsig tells us though, ". . . that imitation was a real evil that had to be broken before real . . . teaching could begin."[114]

If we can't categorize actions leading to quality and imitate them, then how do we become good teachers? Pirsig responds with, "It doesn't make a bit of difference how you do it! Just so it's good."[115] Of course the next question completes the circle. How do we know what's good? "By reversing a basic rule that all things which are to be taught must first be defined, he had found a way

---

[113] Ibid., pp. 200, 201.

[114] Ibid., p. 186.

[115] Ibid., p. 202.

out of all this. He was pointing to no principle, no rule of good . . . (teaching), no theory--but he was pointing to something, nevertheless, that was very real, whose reality they couldn't deny."[116] Quality is what seems right, or good, or beautiful to us--our aesthetics.

Pirsig helps us understand the difference between good teaching, as our aesthetic sense of quality, and imitating good teaching when he sets forth his classical and romantic understanding. He says, "Classical understanding is concerned with . . . piles (of sand) and the basis for sorting and interrelating them. Romantic understanding is directed toward the . . . sand before the sorting begins. (We wanted to) . . . attempt to break the grip of the classical sandsifting mode of understanding and find a point of common understanding between the classic and romantic worlds. Quality . . . seemed to be it. Both worlds used the term. Both knew what it was. It was just that the romantic left it alone and appreciated it for what it was and the classic tried to turn it into a set of intellectual building blocks for other purposes."[117] Good teaching can't just be appreciated. We need to set up a system of understanding for the purpose of such things as promotion, tenure, etc. But that's a liberal smoke screen. What we really want to do

---

[116] Ibid., p. 203. Parenthesis added.

[117] Ibid., pp. 76 & 217. Parentheses added.

is to encourage conformity by and through imitation. A happy dean is a comfortable dean.

Certainly if we can't tell others how to be a good teacher or how we are a good teacher, then we must not know what we are talking about. ". . . if Quality exists in the object, then you must explain just why scientific instruments are unable to detect it. You must suggest instruments that will detect it, or live with the explanation that instruments don't detect it because your whole Quality concept, to put it politely, is a large pile of nonsense."[118]

If good teaching exists in our observations we must be able to use some kind of objective tool to measure it. But to do this we must bring all the individual, personal aesthetics into some common ground, some kind of conformity. When we do this we encourage the loss of individual differences. "On the other hand, if Quality is subjective, existing only in the observer, then this Quality that you make so much of is just a fancy name for whatever you like. It angered him. The great artists of history--Raphael, Beethoven, Michelangelo--they were all just putting out what people liked. They had no goal other than to titillate the senses in a big way. Was that it?"[119] Could it be that quality is simply surface appeal to a person, romanticism of your aesthetics? Certainly classroom popularity contests can determine if a teacher has appeal, but is that good

---

[118] Ibid., p. 223.

[119] Ibid., pp. 223 & 226.

teaching or quality?

Pirsig pulls us in the direction of quality being personal centered. "If everyone knows what quality is, why is there such a disagreement about it? People differ about Quality, not because Quality is different, but because people are different in terms of experience."[120] To judge good teachers we would want to look at the differences of people rather than their commonness. We ought to encourage differences amongst people rather than conformity. Education, as personal centered, should help encourage an individual's aesthetics rather than have everyone conform. Teaching, as personal centered, should be a measure of quality. "A person who cares about what he sees and does is a person who's bound to have some characteristics of Quality. You have to have a sense of what's good. That is what carries you forward."[121]

In Chapter I we learned that the relationship between a teacher and students is important. Also, education is a personal centered relation, "The Quality which creates the world emerges as a relationship between man and his experience. Quality couldn't be independently related with either the subject or the object but could be found only in the relationship of the two with each other. Quality is not a thing. It is an event."[122] Events simply happen in

---

[120]Ibid., pp. 230 & 244.

[121]Ibid., pp. 269 & 278.

[122]Ibid., pp. 233 & 368.

the natural course of things. They can be imitated, but the original event is the one that expresses quality. To define good teaching by a process of imitation is to miss it entirely.

So where does this lead us? Where does one start? "The place to improve the world is first in one's own heart and head and hands, and then work outward from there."[123] If every teacher did this then perhaps we could make judgments about people and then let them have the freedom to do their own work their own way. This may be preferable to making judgments on certain categories and trying to move everyone together in an imitation process. We know so little of human beings, at present, to be able to do this however. This judgment has little to do with what we consider socially correct or right. After thinking about education, teaching and evaluation, and reviewing much of the literature, it seems that what we are attempting to do currently is impossible. Other measures need to be searched for and studied. Someday these measures may be adapted, but if we don't begin to study the questions we'll never know. We seem to spend a great deal of time in higher education inventing categories of education, teaching and evaluations and then measuring them. We may be creating the wrong environment.

"Quality! Virtue! Dharma! That is what the Sophists were teaching! Not ethical relativism. Not pristine 'virtue'. But

---

[123]Ibid., p. 291. There are some people who are not good teachers, even if they have a good heart.

arete. Excellence."[124] A teacher's relationship with excellence may have little to do with students. Excellence is personal centered. A person possessed with excellence may be a good teacher, but it doesn't matter to the person. The teacher is committed personally to excellence. And students may also share that commitment. The commitments of both teacher and students may, in fact, help create excellence from the particular relationship to each other. A group of students can help make a good teacher, just as a teacher can help make good students. But we would probably agree that these situations are somewhat out of the ordinary, in spite of all the imitation going on. There is nothing liberal about excellence.[125]

---

[124] Ibid., p. 371.

[125] Many of these thoughts were derived from a class with David Schuman and other friends.

CHAPTER III

JUDGMENT AND EVALUATION OF TEACHERS

> (We like things to be) . . . divided up or looked at in such a way that they become simple. (But) They are messy, and one must try to understand all the facets. This appears to be alien to the American mentality.
>
> A European Manager

If excellence in teaching is what we are truly interested in achieving in higher education, then we must carefully focus more on quality and less on the liberal notions of consistency and uniformity. Yet the whole evaluation process, as we have seen, is rested on liberal notions. This situation yields nothing substantial, save for a process which signals wide emotional sensitivities or a lack of seriousness.

A point of agreement, however, between administrators and teachers in higher education is that teaching is important. Therefore judging teaching becomes a critical process. Anyone who has reviewed even some of the literature on evaluation of teachers would think that there was an abundance of ideas from which to choose. Likewise, it seems odd when Hannah Arendt mentions that she will do "an analysis of the faculty of judgment, and here the chief difficulty will be the curious scarcity of sources providing authoritative testimony."[1] Arendt describes judgment "as a distinct

---

[1]Hannah Arendt, The Life of the Mind - Volume One- Thinking (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971) p. 215.

capacity of our minds"[2] and not at all a series of questions which standardize criteria. In fact, ". . . judgments . . . have nothing in common with logical operations. . . ."[3] It is no wonder, then, that there is a scarcity of ideas.

Given that we are in no way close to any agreement in higher education with respect to the evaluation of teaching, it seems appropriate to step away from the current literature and previous methodologies and focus on the notion of judgment itself. Recall that the literature is really an exercise in which method or checklist is best. Studying methods at this juncture is ". . . a little like trying to kill a Planaria by cutting it in half. Instead of getting one dead worm, you get two live ones. If you don't like worms, all you've done is doubled your problems."[4]

Since Arendt died before being able to fully explore the faculty of judgment, much of what she wrote was her interpretation of Kant's The Critique of Judgment. In fact, the writings of Arendt concerning judgment were extracts from her classroom lectures assembled by Mary McCarthy. Arendt said, "Not till Kant's Critique of Judgment did this faculty become a major topic of a major thinker."[5]

---

[2]Ibid. [3]Ibid.

[4]David Schuman, Bureaucracies, Organizations, and Administration (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1976) p. 61.

[5]Arendt, op. cit., Thinking, p. 215.

A Peculiar Talent

A focus on the process of judgment is not an easy task. "In Kant judgment emerges as 'a peculiar talent which can be practiced only and cannot be taught'."[6] This is somewhat different from our liberal notions of identifying what is 'good' about teaching and attempting to have everyone conform to that standard of 'good'. We can practice judgment, but we cannot teach how to do it. And yet, it is so very important to understand judgment. We judge all the time and try to do things as a result of it. Kant believed, "'. . . people are commonly still lacking in judgment. . . .'"[7]

The faculty of judgment is a mind process which seems to negate, or at least make very difficult, most of the evaluation processes we know today. Arendt tells us that, ". . . the first part of the Critique of Judgment deals with objects of judgment properly speaking, such as an object which we call 'beautiful' without being able to subsume it under a general category."[8] To change Arendt's words slightly--if you say, 'What an excellent teacher! You don't arrive at this judgment by first saying all teachers are excellent; this person is a teacher; hence they are excellent.' While this judging may seem extreme, it isn't. For example, suppose we said good

---

[6]Ibid. [7]Ibid.

[8]Hannah Arendt, The Life of the Wind - Volume Two - Willing (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978) p. 256.

teachers are always prepared for class; this teacher is prepared for class; hence this person is a good teacher. That, of course, is not necessarily correct. We know from our own classes there were times when the teacher was fully prepared and delivered an awful classroom lecture. There are other times when the teacher was not at all prepared and delivered a stunning address. The lesson here is clear, an object of judgment properly speaking cannot be generalized. It is particular.

Arendt then tells us that the second part of the Critique of Judgment dealt with, ". . . the impossibility to derive any particular product of nature from general causes: 'Absolutely no human reason . . . can hope to understand the production of even a blade of grass by mere (natural) causes'. The accent here is on 'understand': How can I understand (and not just explain) why there is grass at all and then this particular blade of grass."[9] Again, changing Arendt's words slightly: 'How can I understand why there is education at all and then this particular educator?' Furthermore, if we cannot, through reason, understand nature and natural causes, how can we even attempt to make judgments about teachers?

---

[9]Ibid., first parenthesis added.

"Judgment of the particular--this is beautiful, this is ugly, this is right, this is wrong--has no place in Kant's moral philosophy. Judgment is not practical reason; practical reason 'reasons' and tells me what to do and what not to do; it lays down the law. . . . Judgment, on the contrary, arises from 'a merely contemplative pleasure or inactive delight'."[10] This quotation is simply loaded with meaning and turns our notions of judgment on end. Much of what we call evaluation is, actually, practical reason. Evaluations, through standardized criteria, tell us what to do and what not to do as a teacher. In fact we arrive, jointly sometimes, at this criteria by reasoning out in common what the criteria ought to be. We will recall, however, that this process rarely meets with a common approval and, instead, is taken less and less seriously. This is not meant to imply that practical reasoning is not important in evaluating teachers. It is true that minimum competencies and practical criteria are important in any occupation, such as certification of medical doctors, but here we are exploring a process of judgment from a new, or different, point of view. Indeed, we are interested in more than practical criteria and minimum competencies. We are interested in judgment and excellence.

It is the delcaration that judgment is not practical reason which causes us to stop and take note of this faculty called judgment.

---

[10]Ibid., pp. 256, 257.

Firstly, not being practical reason takes us away from the liberal notions of utility along with general cause and effect. Any faculty of the mind which can do this is certainly intriguing. Secondly, judgment is apparently something different from a set of actions, since it comes from 'contemplative pleasure and/or inactive delight'. Thirdly, if judgment is not action then it appears as though the process is one of being on the outside looking in. Judgment is ". . . decided by this attitude of the mere spectators, of those 'who are not engaged in the game themselves', only follow it with 'wishful', 'passionate participation', . . ."[11]

Is the dean of a college merely a spectator in the judgment of teaching? Certainly this is true for most deans; they administer and don't teach any longer. In judging teaching, or a particular teacher, a dean is clearly an observer of the spectacle. Most deans were teachers at one point in their life and follow teaching and teachers with a wishful participation.

Acting Versus Judging

Judgment, as a process, is our set of perceptions and reflections about something we observe. Kant, when reflecting on the French Revolution, said that he found "'. . . in the hearts of all spectators . . . a wishful participation that borders closely on

---

[11]Ibid., p. 257.

enthusiasm. . . .'"[12] Arendt adds that, ". . . without this sympathetic participation the 'meaning' of the occurrence would be altogether different, or simply non-existent."[13] The process of judgment emanates from the vantage point of a spectator and does not lend itself to participation, ". . . what you see here clearly is the clash between the principle according to which you act and the principle according to which you judge. . . ."[14]

An example may be helpful. If a dean observed a teacher who did not give essay questions on examinations, the dean will find this either aesthetically pleasing or not pleasing. If it is judged to be displeasing, then so be it. But when the dean makes this judgment, he or she does so through inactive delight or wishful participation. As soon as the dean employs practical reasoning--(when I was a teacher I always gave some essay questions; this teacher must be lazy and doesn't want to take the time to read essays; an expressed objective of our program is to teach better communications skills; hence I will demand that this teacher add some essay questions to the examinations)--at that point the dean is an active participant. Judgment has been acted upon.

Many readers may react by believing that the dean was probably correct in his actions. The dean may find out later that this teacher is doing written assignments separately from examinations, and that examinations were covering great spans of material.

---

[12]Ibid., p. 259. [13]Ibid. [14]Ibid., pp. 259, 260.

With this new knowledge the dean may judge the new circumstances as pleasing. The assumption, however, is that the dean actually learns this. The dean may become an active participant and never learn this additional information. In the judgment of teachers and teaching a dean cannot be any more than a spectator.

Yet, there is another twist. In the process of evaluation of teachers and teaching, as we commonly understand it today, the dean is an active participant by design. It seems that evaluation of teachers and judging teachers are different activities. In judging, the dean is a spectator; in evaluating, the dean is a participant. Furthermore, the two activities are not unrelated. The importance of this will be explained later in this chapter.

In the process of judgment we have a spectacle of some kind, made up of participants and spectators. The participants in a spectacle are directly responsible, through action, for the creation of the spectacle. And in order for the spectacle to be seen, there must be spectators. Kant noted that it was ". . . truly marvellous and remarkable 'how little difference there is between the learned and the ignorant in judging while there is the greatest difference in making'."[15] Kant also reflected that the relationship between the participants, the spectacle and the spectators was an important one. This is significant to keep in mind when thinking about judgment. Also remember that the participants are responsible for

---

[15]Ibid., p. 263.

the spectacle; for what they make. At the same time, the participants are not incapable of judging. While this is so, the reverse is likely not to be true. The spectators do not, necessarily, have the abilities and capabilities to make things. Of course it is only through judgment, on the part of the spectators, that meaning is given to the spectacle. But the purely happy or self-satisfied dean, or student, can't be trusted to give a good judgment of teaching. One has to be involved in the relation and committed.

Taste

This judgment, which gives meaning to spectacles, arises from our aesthetics or taste. Arendt asks, "Why then should taste--not only with Kant but since Gracian--be elevated to and become the vehicle of the mental faculty of judgment?"[16] It is an odd sort of vehicle. One can see, hear or even touch teaching, but how do we develop a taste for teaching? We may be able to develop a taste for fish or dark bread, but teaching? Arendt helps us. "Of our five senses, three give us clearly objects of the external world and therefore are easily communicable. Sight, hearing, touching deal directly . . . with objects; smell and taste give inner sensations which are entirely private and incommunicable. . . ."[17]

We can see and hear activities of teaching by classroom observation or indirect observation through students. We can even see and touch materials utilized in classrooms through notes,

---

[16]Ibid., p. 264. [17]Ibid., p. 263.

handouts, examinations, etc. A dean can evaluate these senses objectively, especially through practical reasoning. But the dean will judge this teaching as pleasing or not pleasing and the judgment derives from some inner sense and cannot be communicated in words. At this point the dean must resort to the outward senses which are easily communicated. This process is an evaluation which employs practical reasoning in an attempt to explain a judgment; ". . . only taste and smell are discriminatory in their very nature. . . . Moreover, the it-pleases or displeases me is overwhelmingly present in taste . . . . The point of the matter is: I am directly affected."[18] We can easily understand that taste is a private sense and is directly affecting us. But how do we taste teaching? We don't taste teaching as we might taste pizza. To explain this operation we turn to another faculty of the mind, that of imagination. "Imagination . . . transforms an object into something with which I do not have to be directly confronted but which in some sense I have internalized, so that I now can be affected by it as though it were given to me by a nonobjective sense."[19]

Our imagination plays a significant role in moving us from taste to judgment. Arendt tells us that, "The imagination has prepared it (spectacle) so that I now can reflect on it: . . . Only what . . . affects you in representation . . . can then be judged to

---

[18]Ibid., p. 264. [19]Ibid., p. 265.

be right or wrong . . . . You then call it judgment and no longer taste because . . . you have now, by means of representation, established the proper distance, . . . or disinterestedness requisite for . . . evaluating something at its proper worth."[20] Then judgment is a reflection, more than a perception, and is treated much like the private senses of taste and smell. It seems confusing to be in relation to the spectacle and, at the same time, reflect on the spectacle in a disinterested way. But, when we have experienced a relationship with a teacher, we must reflect on that experience in order to judge it. We may have hated a particular teacher, but on reflection realize that we have learned so very much. Our judgment will be that this person was a good teacher. If we reflect in a participative or interested way we may reason that if we hated this teacher, then perhaps this person cannot be a good teacher for others. Judgment is a reflection, not reasoning, on the internalization of our experience. Judgment is an inner sensation and is not easily communicated; if we try to communicate the judgment we are really applying practical reason.

We already know that we cannot teach judgment and that Kant believed that people lacked an ability to judge. We can practice judgment, however. What we need to know is how the practice of judgment takes place. Arendt said, ". . . if the faculty (of

---

[20] Ibid., parenthesis added.

judgment) is separate from other faculties of the mind, then we shall have to ascribe to it its own modus operandi, its own way of proceeding."[21]

How We Practice Judgment

Arendt attempts to establish some maxims as a way to practice judgment. The maxims relate to Kant's sensus communis. "'Under the sensus communis we must include the idea of a sense common to all, i.e. of a faculty of judgment which, in its reflection, takes account . . . of the mode of representation of all other men in thought, in order . . . to compare its judgment with the collective reason of humanity. . . .'"[22] Arendt tells us that we should follow, ". . . the maxims of this sensus communis: To think for oneself (the maxim of enlightenment); to put ourselves in thought in the place of everyone else (the maxim of the enlarged mentality); and the maxim of consistency (to be in agreement with oneself, . . .)"[23]

It is important to review these maxims because it would be easy to misinterpret them. The first maxim, that of enlightenment, means we should think for ourself. This is the first phase of judgment; the decision as to whether something is right or wrong, beautiful or

---

[21]Arendt, op. cit., Thinking, p. 216., parenthesis added.

[22]Arendt, op. cit., Willing, p. 268.

[23]Ibid., p. 269.

otherwise, etc. This is a critical maxim and requires our utmost attention. We must reflect and accept our inner sensations. Kant called the enlightenment, "'. . . the maxim of a never-passive reason.'"[24] To employ practical reasoning here is to become prejudiced and passive. To think for oneself requires active thought (reflection, not reasoning) to free our minds from prejudice or passiveness (the stopping of our reflection through practical reasoning).

The second maxim (enlarged mentality) is the second phase of judgment where we, in essence, compare our thought to the possible thought of others. Note that this does not mean the actual thought of others. Kant describes this by saying, "'This is done by comparing our judgment with the possible rather than the actual judgment of others, and by putting ourselves in the place of any other man. . . .'"[25] This difference between comparisons of possible, rather than actual judgment is important. If we were to attempt an understanding of the actual judgments of others (which we know cannot be communicated) we would be employing practical reasoning. Arendt said, "To accept what goes on in the minds of those whose 'standpoint' . . . is not my own would mean no more than to accept

---

[24]Ibid., p. 258.

[25]Ibid., p. 268.

passively their thought, that is, to exchange their prejudices for . . . (my) prejudices. . . ."[26]

There are additional warnings, especially with respect to the third maxim--consistency. This does not mean to be consistent or in agreement with everyone else's judgments. It does not mean that your judgments and actions will always be in agreement (recall the clash between the principles according to which you act and judge). This maxim simply means to be in agreement with yourself. That is, your judgment has become action through choice. It is clear from the maxims that the practice of judgment requires thoughtful reflection. Judgment is not simply attaching oneself to popularized, standardized or liberal viewpoints; it requires thoughtful work. This is different from the easy, practical way which we normally, and perhaps unwittingly, approach judgment.

The maxims make enough sense to us, but they are not prescriptions for action. We must keep in mind that judgment arises from inactive delight. We must continue to focus on the process of judging, knowing that we cannot apply practical reasoning to understand judgment. We have only established a framework for practicing judgment.

To judge a teacher as pleasing or displeasing for the reason of 'just because' is a valid judgment. It does not seem logical, or especially fair, but it is a judgment. A dean who states such

---

[26]Ibid., p. 258, parenthesis added.

things would be looked upon as strange, or worse. A reason of 'just because' doesn't lend much credence to judgment. We live in a rational society, one based on practical reasoning and scientific truths. If one is judged as pleasing by a dean we generally are satisfied to know that. If one is judged to be displeasing, then we want to know why; what are the reasons so that we can improve. In both cases deans believe that they must provide reasons for their judgment. This is plausible, and probably unavoidable, in our society today.

Judgment Is Choice

Recall that judgments are reflections, inner sensations, that are not easily communicated. "The validity of these judgments never (has) the validity of cognitive or scientific propositions, which are not judgments, properly speaking. (If you say, the sky is blue or two and two are four, you do not 'judge'; you say what is, compelled by the evidence either of your senses or your mind.) In this way, you can never compel anybody to agree with your judgments. . . ."[27]

---

[27] Ibid., p. 269. Attempts to reach agreement on judgments are many times ludicrous and dishonest. One of my neighbors is an engineer for a public utility. He was hired specifically to initiate and build a new power plant. The plant is finished and he was advised that his work had been very good. However, he will not receive a raise this year because of a new job rating system recently installed in the company. This new system puts big raises in pockets of those who developed the rating system and clearly deemphasizes engineers. They are judged to be displeasing, and that is the judgment.

Judgment is not an attempt to rationalize our reflections. Rather, judgment is a process of choice. We can consider the communication of judgment as an honest account of our reflections.

Firstly, we do not have to rationalize our judgments. "Because we can call something beautiful, we have a 'pleasure in its existence' and that is 'wherein all interest consists'."[28] Secondly, to communicate our judgments ". . . you tell your choices and you choose your company."[29] It is clear that the schism between judgment and evaluation has been established. And yet, evaluation is exactly what deans are charged to do. If a dean communicates judgment, those being judged (teachers) will demand practical reasoning. If a dean practices judgment (as a spectator) those who are judged (as participants) will demand practical reasons, which undermine and confuse honest judgments. Furthermore, a dean has great difficulty keeping a disinterested delight when they are dragged into evaluations.

United Mankind

This dilemma can be solved. Arendt explains, ". . . Kant's deliberation about a united mankind, living in eternal peace. . . . If . . . 'everyone expects and requires from everyone else this reference . . . of disinterested delight . . . an original compact dictated by mankind itself.' . . .It is by virtue of this idea . . .

---

[28]Ibid., p. 270. [29]Ibid.

present in every single man . . . that this idea becomes the principle of their actions as well as their judgments. It is at this point that actor and spectator become united. . . ."[30] Therefore, the dilemma of a dean in the process of judgment (as a spectator) and the process of evaluation (as a participant) can be solved by simply agreeing that both processes have a place in our understanding of each other as human beings. What is not so simple in this process is to have people recognize and practice judgment. It is just much less work to practice evaluation.

"The chief difficulty in judgment is that it is 'the faculty of thinking the particular'; but to <u>think</u> means to generalize, hence it is the faculty of mysteriously combining the particular, and the general."[31] The ability to accomplish this Arendt describes as a 'natural gift'; ". . . the want of which, according to Kant, is 'ordinarily called stupidity, and for such a failing there is no remedy'."[32] We know that Kant believed that many people still lack in judgment. He does not, however, call everyone stupid. It is not that we cannot practice judgment, it is that we <u>do not</u> practice judgment. Certainly there are those who are not capable of judgment, but most people are capable. Sharing our honest choices and understanding our inner sensations is simply more difficult than the more familiar process of practical reasoning.

---

[30]Ibid., pp. 270, 271. [31]Ibid., p. 271.

[32]Arendt, op. cit., <u>Thinking</u>, p. 69.

Unite Judgment And Evaluation?

In our rational, scientific society practical reasoning and liberalism affect evaluations of teachers. What we do not seem to understand is that judgment takes place, but is masked by practical reasoning. We need to better understand judgment itself if we are to bring together judgment and evaluation. "It is an old idea that the more pointedly and logically we formulate a thesis, the more irresistibly it cries out for its antithesis."[33] Perhaps, on the surface, it is true that evaluation and judgment are on opposite poles. But at the same time, they are related and need to be united. Kant would have us do this through a united mankind, a notion on which to agree.

It would seem as though a dean who wants to seriously judge and evaluate teachers would need two directions. The first direction is to understand and accept judgments better than we do now. We cannot 'prove' our judgment to someone else through practical reasoning. At the same time, our second direction would be one of persuading others, through our judgment, of some common understanding. There are many of us, immersed in our liberal notions, who would say we are wasting our time trying to understand something which we cannot prove. "Nothing is harder, yet nothing more necessary, than to speak of certain things whose existence is neither demonstrable nor probable.

---

[33] Hermann Hesse, The Glass Bead Game (Magister Ludi), trans. by Richard and Clara Winston (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969) p. 12.

The very fact that serious and conscientious men treat them as existing things brings them a step closer to existence and to the possibility of being born."[34]

In order to further our study of judgment we need some underpinnings, something on which to hang our hat; ". . . two ideas appear in Kant on which you must reflect in order to arrive at judgments. . . . Purposiveness (and) exemplary validity. . . ."[35]

Purposiveness

"Every object, says Kant, as a particular, . . . has a purpose. The only objects that seem purposeless are aesthetic objects, on one side, and men, on the other. You cannot ask . . . for what purpose?--since they are good for nothing. But . . . purposeless art objects as well as the seemingly purposeless variety of nature have the 'purpose' of pleasing men, making them feel at home in the world. This can never be proved; but Purposiveness is an idea to regulate your reflections in your reflective judgments."[36]

Beware of deans who tell you that the purpose of student evaluations will not be decisions on tenure, promotion, retention, etc. Deans will say that student evaluations are to 1) help you learn to be a better teacher or 2) help students in their choice of classes

---

[34] Ibid., p. 9.

[35] Arendt, op. cit., Willing, pp. 271, 272, parenthesis added.

[36] Ibid., p. 272.

and professors. The fact is that student evaluations which are published for the above stated purposes will also be utilized in personnel decisions. It is simply too tempting to utilize published, standardized details which generalize teachers.

Another warning is necessary. Beware of deans who do not have access to published student evaluations. Deans should also be aware of their own frustration levels under such circumstances. Every object does have a purpose. Sometimes those purposes collide with each other in ways which are harmful to teachers and deans; ". . . we believe that the major emphasis of any student evaluation should be formative (to improve teaching effectiveness) rather than summative (personnel decisions such as promotion and tenure). . . ."[37] This is a powerful conflict. On one side, the liberal 'striving' to improve is difficult to deny as a worthy purpose. We understand that teachers and deans will not disagree with the notion of improving teaching. On the other side, personnel decisions will be made (judged) and everyone agrees that this must be done. How a dean makes these decisions, however, is not the issue. Student evaluations are for the purpose of teaching improvement and judgments about teachers are inherent in the purpose and position of deans. The circular conflict is all but resolved on the side of teaching improvement, and

---

[37]Memorandum from the Ad Hoc Committee "A" on Student Evaluation of Faculty, Western New England College, Springfield, Massachusetts. Dated October 20, 1981.

deans feel very uncomfortable without some 'rational', 'comparative' system with which to apply judgments concerning personnel decisions. Not only do deans have to make judgments about teachers, these judgments must have the liberal component of consistency.

"(We) . . . have increasingly relied on principles which prize analytical detachment and methodological elegance over insight, based on experience, into the subtleties and complexities of decisions. Increasing the structural distance between those entrusted with exploiting actual . . . opportunities and those who must judge the quality of their work virtually guarantees reliance on objectively quantifiable short-term criteria."[38] An evaluation becomes easier if there are quantifiable, objective and consistent tools available. Deans need this. Teachers don't like it. Although teaching improvement seems to be a fair compromise on the purpose of student evaluations, not all teachers are happy about this methodology. The criticisms go this way. If we use student evaluations for any purpose, we end up having teachers teach toward the evaluation forms. In other words, the idea of teaching improvement is sometimes a facade for playing to the evaluation forms.

---

[38]E. Jerome McCarthy, John F. Grashof, Andrew A. Brogowicz, eds., Readings In Basic Marketing, Third edition (Homewood, Illinois: Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1981) p. 71., parenthesis added.

One example of this process is reflected by Paul Rice at the University of North Carolina, at Asheville. "I chose a particularly likable section of freshman composition . . . I walked into the classroom and brusquely handed back an out-of-class essay on which they had done rather badly. I chided them on their apparent lack of effort. Next, I handed out the evaluation forms and told them it was their chance to get even. A week later, I strolled into the same class. I was sunny of disposition; I joked with them. I told them what a great class they had been (which was true) . . . . Oh, and by the way, I had misplaced those faculty evaluation surveys and would they be so kind as to do them again? I improved . . . by nearly 17 per cent on the overall survey . . . simply by altering the circumstances of the survey's administration."[39]

Sometimes the examples are even more blatant. In an article partially entitled, "25 teaching excellence tips for marketing professors: . . . (the authors state) . . . we have researched the subject and compiled the following list of tools and teaching techniques which might be used to increase your evaluation scores."[40]

---

[39]Paul Rice, "Grading the Teacher: How to Get High Marks," The Chronicle of Higher Education (Washington, D.C.: The Chronicle of Higher Education, Inc., October 7, 1981) p. 20.

[40]William G. Zikmund and Michael F. d'Amico, "25 teaching excellence tips for marketing professors: The collected wisdom of an anonymous book salesman" Marketing News, July 24, 1981, p. 34., parenthesis added.

On the surface this seems tame enough, until we realize that these authors have indicated that teaching excellence can be measured by evaluation forms. A quick and partial summary of their twenty-five tips helps us understand the serious misconception that arises from the notions of teaching excellence. "1. Always make sure the first class meeting lasts only 10 minutes; 2. Announce that you're either too dumb or too lazy to take attendance; 3. Always give the illusion that you're democratic*; 9. Humor in the classroom is highly correlated with good evaluation scores; 12. Use a modern, multimedia approach. Show a lot of movies; 14. Drop days from the class schedule, especially Fridays. Call them 'library research days'; 16. When you actually do lecture, teach only what's interesting; 18. Quantity is a grade-related dimension that students can understand. Neither they nor you really knows what quality is. They may write 15 short papers rather than one 'quality' paper. Having done all that work on 15 papers they surely deserve an A. Also, word will get around that, while your course isn't too hard, 15 papers are required; 21. If you're a strict grader on early exams . . . a sudden relaxing of standards at the end of the semester can win you points, . . ."[41]

---

[41]Ibid., pp. 34 & 38. *The term democratic is often used as a manipulative idea. As Maslow tells us, "'A skillful group leader may be able . . . to create the feeling that this decision reflects the will of the group discovered through the workings of the democratic process.'" (As quoted in Schuman, op. cit., p. 125.)

The authors providing these tips on excellence were attempting to be satirical. At the same time they have summed up the essence of evaluating teachers by standardized student evaluations. All the issues previously mentioned are expressed, especially the folly of looking to standardized evaluation forms for clues of teaching excellence. Also strikingly represented are the beliefs of what constitutes good teaching and good judging. In addition, it is clear that methodology affects measurement and none of this comes close to understanding teaching excellence. Playing to the evaluations, or changing the methods, has little to do with the process of judging.

Another part of the criticism goes this way. If teaching improvement is to be meaningful, we should set up teachers to help other teachers. "'In all, student ratings taken alone, without assistance in interpretation, seem to be of limited help to a teacher wishing to improve instruction.' However, positive results had already been reported with the use of a combination of student ratings and an instructional consultant."[42] In other words, the forms, by themselves, are not enough to improve teaching. The forms need professional interpretation.

One teacher explains his confusion in this way, ". . . we are told that 'Humanities teachers, . . . were rated less likely to

---

[42]Judith D. Aubrecht, "Reliability, Validity and Generalizability Of Student Ratings of Instruction," Idea Paper No. 6, Center for Faculty Evaluation & Development, Kansas State University, November, 1981.

inform students of (grading) methods and less likely to teach toward announced objectives.' Yet, . . . 'slightly higher student ratings of course value and teacher-effectiveness are found in the field of Humanities. . . .' What!"[43] If this confusion over interpretation of student ratings exist, how can we possibly improve our teaching? "When the plot of a Greek Tragedy became so enmeshed in its own twists and turns that a resolution seemed impossible, the playwrights employed a ruse called--I'll translate--the god-in-the-machine. A machine would lower a god down among the confused mortals and he would resolve the contradictions. Surely . . . (these studies reach) just such a point of panic when (they) suggest that one answer to instructional development may be facilitated (this year's word) by employing as 'some kind of counsel', not a bird, not a plane, but a 'master teacher'."[44]

To state that the purposiveness of evaluations of teachers in higher education is either improving teaching or for personnel decisions is to miss it altogether. The fact is that judging will take place and all purposes intended will be implemented, regardless of the ways we artificially separate purposes.

---

[43]Dr. K. Edward Jansen, Memorandum, Western New England College, Springfield, Massachusetts, February 26, 1982., parenthesis added, p. 2.

[44]Ibid., p. 3., first parenthesis added, emphasis in the original.

Exemplary Validity

Arendt tells us that, ". . . Kant's second and I think by far more valuable solution is . . . exemplary validity. Let us see what that is: Every particular object, for instance a table, has a corresponding concept by which we recognize the table as a table. This you can conceive of as . . . a schematic or merely formal table shape to which every table somehow must conform. Or: if you proceed conversely from the many tables which you have seen in your life, strip off them all secondary qualities and the remainder is a table in general, containing the minimum properties common to all tables. The abstract table. You have one more possibility left, . . . you may meet or think of some table which you judge to be the best possible table and take this table as the example of how tables actually should be--the exemplary table. This is and remains a particular which in its very particularity reveals the generality which otherwise could not be defined."[45]

We can't pretend to think that Kant's helping hand, as explained by Arendt, is a simple solution. But the thought process is fascinating. The schematic of a teacher probably defines the objective measures we have studied, like class preparation, delivery, goals, etc. That is, every dean has some sense of a schematic for a teacher. There are clear, identifiable criteria which form the mold

---

[45]Arendt, op. cit., Willing, p. 272.

of expectations from a teacher (meet your classes on time, call in when ill, attend faculty meetings, etc.). The exemplary teacher, however, is your choice and judgment as to the best way for a teacher to act or be, and this is beyond the schematic. This choice is not as clear as the schematic and is difficult to put in words. But you, as a dean, know what a good teacher is or what your exemplary teacher should be.

All the evaluation methods and surveys we encounter are designed around the schematic of a teacher. Very little is ever written about the exemplary teacher. "Carried out conscientiously, conducted at a high level, conveyed with proper passion, teaching is an arduous task. Yet it is not often written about, except indirectly in memoirs or autobiographies. . . ."[46]

"If we knew what makes a great teacher, it might help us in the more urgent task of training a good one. We might find, of course, that the condition of being a great teacher is so far beyond the reach of method and intention that the knowledge would not be applicable; even so, it would be inspiring."[47] So we will approach

---

[46]Joseph Epstein, ed., Masters: Portraits of Great Teachers (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1981) p. xi. of introduction.

[47]Denis Donoghue, "Performing Live, in the Classroom," The New York Times Book Review, April 5, 1981, p. 7.

the notion of an exemplary teacher with these thoughts in mind. Perhaps we can identify some characteristic traits of great teachers that will be helpful for all teachers. Perhaps this is impossible, but the study itself will be helpful in some important ways. How do we start? What is an exemplary teacher? "I suppose one's own ideas about teaching come directly from one's own best teachers."[48]

The in-depth understanding of what a great, or best, or exemplary, teacher is to someone becomes evident only after an extensive, inner exploration. Few people have reflected and then written extensively about their best teachers; fewer still have read these words. We must review some of these writings, knowing full well that reading in depth is better than reviewing. The review can be approached in two ways. The first approach would be one of reviewing adjectives and statements used to describe one's best teacher. This, however, has a tendency to revolve around the schematic of a teacher and includes such things as mastery of subject matter, making themselves available to students and such things. The second approach would be to identify the less distinguishable items that are mentioned, but never are defined in clear ways. The latter approach seems to be more in keeping with the notion of an exemplary teacher, i.e. our own choice or judging of certain characteristics that exemplify our best teacher, and it is difficult to put into words.

---

[48] Joseph Epstein, "A Class Act," Quest/81, September, 1981, p. 64.

Several unique threads have been identified which are not clearly explained by using a set of adjectives or by common liberal themes. These threads of understanding are:

1. Influence
2. Reverence
3. Importance of Teaching
4. Mistakes
5. Lack of Acceptance by Colleagues[49]

1. Influence. The influence of your best teacher is not always clear and understandable, even after you set it down in writing. But, the one thing you can be sure of is that, it is influence. It has changed you in certain ways, or it has heightened your experience or beliefs. It is a reflection on a heuristic leap, as mentioned in Chapter I. Let's review a few examples of influence.

"It was many years after I left Princeton before I realized that it was he (Christian Gauss) who first taught me how to think."[50] Edmund Wilson has bestowed upon Gauss the effects of an amazing influence. The pragmatists among the readers will probably suggest that Wilson's mother may have had much more influence in his capabilities with respect to thinking. That may even be correct. But,

---

[49]These phenomena were taken from my own readings and rereadings. The order of importance was created by the number of incidents mentioned. Not every one of the threads were mentioned in every essay on great teachers, but by far these things were mentioned more often than other items.

[50]Epstein, op. cit., Masters, p. 17., parenthesis added.

Wilson has felt the influence of his best teacher. In reality the influence may have taken other forms for Wilson. The point is, though, the influence is present even if in mysterious ways. Wilson said later about Gauss, ". . . his influence was vital for those who felt it."[51]

The influence of a best teacher worked in so many ways. George Brockway knew the influence of John William Miller. "His thought was deceptively simple, but for anyone who can grasp it, nothing will ever be the same again."[52] This change in us as a result of influence is pervasive. "Hannah Arendt's interpretations, original and provocative, shocked us out of our complacency and forced us to consider anew what we thought we understood."[53]

Some students fight this influence in a conscious way. They fight with nerve and persistence, and yield all the same. Edwin Newman said about Hilary Marquand, "I don't know that he quite inspired me--I tended to resist inspiration in those days--but there was a college teacher who had a lasting effect on me."[54]

2. Reverence. Some may believe that reverence is influence gone awry. It may be considered to be a blind faith of sorts. To revere a best teacher may be pushing an influence toward deference of a teacher's opinions. Regardless of how we might view reverence, it is

---

[51]Ibid., p. 23. [52]Ibid., p. 164. [53]Ibid., p. 200.

[54]Epstein, op. cit., Quest/81, p. 30.

awesome. While many students and former students may admit to an influence by their best teachers, few will slip over into reverence. Werner Dannhauser says of Leo Strauss, ". . . he had a number of students so devoted to him that they became known as his disciples . . . that mystification increased because I realized he had violated many of the rules for good teaching. . . ."[55] At first glance this may seem like a true confession of blind faith. Strauss was not even following the rules for good teaching and, yet, some of his students were totally devoted to him. We want good teachers in higher education, but apparently we are not looking for messiahs. But on closer inspection, we must realize that the rules of good teaching set forth an appropriate schematic of a teacher. Reverence of a teacher is our judgment about the exemplary teacher.

Joseph Brennan said, "Looking back now, I find it hard to describe the atmosphere of reverent awe that surrounded the philosopher (Alfred North Whitehead) in those days."[56] Reverence may have a lasting effect on students; it means a sterling example to follow. Wilson said, ". . . just as Judge Medina says he has been asking himself all his life whether Christian Gauss would approve of his conduct--I still make an effort to live up to it."[57]

---

[55]Epstein, op. cit., Masters, pp. 253 & 263.

[56]Ibid., p. 50, parenthesis added.

[57]Ibid., p. 19.

3. Importance of Teaching. Many of the comments concerning influence and reverence centered on the knowledge of the teacher. They were knowledgeable, scholarly, brilliant or thoughtful. And those traits may have led to influence or reverence. However, a teacher as a teacher is also important. The role of a teacher was second to no other trait. Nisbet tell us that at Berkeley in the early 1930's, "There were but two sources of honor then on the campus--teaching and reputed learning, in that order."[58] James Fixx speaks of Oberlin in the 1950's; ". . . that what went on in their classrooms became the stuff of campus legend."[59] Teaching, and whatever that is supposed to mean in the schematic or in the exemplary, is important to students.

4. Mistakes. One of the things that people mention about their best teacher is that they made mistakes. The Masters were sometimes in error. They were fallible, real human beings. Two thoughts intervene here. The first is the old cliche--we learn from our mistakes. The second is that our best teachers are not dumb; when their point of view is in variance with established facts, the variance is not of central concern. We learn that the mistake helps to illuminate our

---

[58]Ibid., p. 74., emphasis added.

[59]Epstein, op. cit., Quest/81, p. 26.

best teacher's ideas. Again, Wilson on Gauss: "He told me once that Henry Ford had said, 'Cut your own wood and it will warm you twice', not knowing that Ford had been quoting Thoreau."[60] Victor Barnouw said, "I found many discrepancies and contradictions in Ruth Benedict's accounts of the Pueblo Indians."[61] Other comments were, "Cohen was sometimes wrong about facts. (and) . . . even a profound thinker like Whitehead may be misled by a translation."[62]

Another realization of a teacher's human-like qualities came in the area of hobbies or other outside interests. It was somewhat enlightening to know that the best teacher had subsidiary and somewhat common interests. Graff said Winters was, ". . . a close follower of boxing, fond of analogies between the art of the ring and the art of poetry. . . ."[63] Anthony Hecht said, "At the time I knew him Mr. (John Crowe) Ransom was an avid baseball fan, an insatiable player of bridge, and if there was any fierceness at all in his character he was said to have expressed it in his playing of croquet."[64]

---

[60]Epstein, op. cit., Masters, p. 16.

[61]Ibid., p. 175.

[62]Ibid., pp. 42 & 55, parenthesis added.

[63]Ibid., p. 151.

[64]Ibid., p. 185.

Lucy Nylund has studied the notions of adult education. She remarked that "Little or nothing is mentioned about their values, fantasies, conflicts, interests and loves. Indeed a review of the literature could easily lead one to think these features are not to be found in adult life."[65] The same could be said about teachers. And when a student realizes that their best teacher is also a human being, there is an additional impression of greatness associated with that teacher.

5. Lack of Acceptance by Colleagues. It seems that the Masters may be non-conformists. Or, at the very least, they do not follow the popular point of view to the exclusion of their own thoughts. Dannhauser said that Strauss' ". . . work tended to be neglected, misunderstood, ridiculed. In other words, he was controversial--and he still is."[66] C. S. Lewis was ". . . out of step with the modern attitude toward the academic study of English as it took shape in his lifetime. In this, as in most things, he swam against the current; all his life."[67] Also, "Hannah Arendt has been attacked from every political corner."[68] Kenneth Lynn said, "The multiple

---

[65]Lucy Nylund, in an unpublished paper, p. 16.

[66]Epstein, op. cit., Masters, p. 253.

[67]Ibid., p. 247.

[68]Ibid., p. 209.

ambiguities in his beliefs made a number of thoughtful students suspicious of him. In fact, there were some who hated (F.O.) Matthiessen, as did quite a few of his colleagues on the Harvard faculty. Nevertheless, his improbable combination of ideals gave him great strength as a teacher."[69] But all this does not deter those who believe in their best teacher.

Do five, seemingly obscure, traits help us find the exemplary teacher? Possibly this could be true. Or perhaps we have simply uncovered the antithesis of the schematic of a teacher. Perhaps we have missed the whole explanation of an exemplary teacher. "Where do we classify this phenomenon? What do we call it, how explain it? . . . it is not because I wish to destroy its beauty . . . but because I want to describe and preserve it as distinctly as possible."[70]

There is a sense of connectedness amongst the five traits which seems to describe the speech and action of our best teacher. It is as if there is an act of creation from our best teachers, rather than an act of reporting on a particular subject matter. These traits do not seem to be as easily understood as the schematic. And yet, they are evidenced in many descriptions of great teachers. This listing of five traits is probably as good as any of the current checklists, perhaps better. But, of course, it's silly to say that we judge a

---

[69]Ibid., p. 113, parenthesis added.

[70]Hesse, op. cit., p. 113.

teacher to be good simply because they don't get along with their colleagues. This shows how the current evaluation checklists and methodologies, pushed to the extreme, are inherently silly.

There is merit to the idea of asking students to write about their teachers, instead of checking off standardized categories on student evaluation forms. Any time we ask students to write thoughtful paragraphs concerning their teachers, they have a tendency to reiterate the same categories they are used to seeing on various evaluation forms. Even so, somewhere in the paragraphs there seems to be reference to unexplainable traits, especially if a student really believes the teacher to be good. If standardized student evaluation forms tend to homogenize teachers, or at best identify those who are inept, then perhaps thoughtful paragraphs may help us to distinguish between good and great teachers.

One should be careful not to attempt to quantify results of thoughtful paragraphs. If we presuppose that over half of the students must believe they were influenced by a teacher in order for the teacher to be great, then we may be substituting one schematic for another. A better question to ask ourselves may be, 'Is anyone influenced by this teacher?' and be pleased when <u>someone is influenced</u>.

So, there are things that can be learned from students who write thoughtful paragraphs about their teachers. But adjectives describing a schematic of a teacher are only minimally helpful. What seems to be most helpful in our search for the exemplary

teacher is the isolation and recognition of unexplainable traits. This judgment about a teacher becomes an important reflection on good teaching.

CHAPTER IV

THREE TEACHERS: THEIR VIEWS

> The most glorious exploits do not always furnish us with the clearest discoveries of virtue or vice in men; sometimes a matter of less moment, an expression or a jest, informs us better of their characters and inclinations, than the most famous sieges, the greatest armaments, or the bloodiest battles whatsoever.
>
> PLUTARCH (Alexander)

In the first three chapters we followed the rethinking of some basic ideas, such as education, teaching and evaluations, from a particular point of view. This chapter is intended to help us understand the world views of three teachers, with respect to the same basic ideas. Hopefully we will learn that there is not one simple explanation as to what education and teaching is, or how this ought to be evaluated. There are many good explanations of such issues, not simply a right or a wrong answer. Also, the in-depth views of these teachers will help us to appreciate the importance of varied, and even divergent, viewpoints.

The technique chosen to solicit information is that of personal interviews, a qualitative research method. In the spirit of an empirical study, these interviews rely upon the observations of the interviewer and the personal experiences of the teachers interviewed. There will be a conspicuous absence of quantitative data derived from the interviews, but that does not indicate a lack of knowledge

obtained. The quantitative aspect of an empirical study is not helpful or interesting for this work. As in the scientific method, the development of the hypothesis is a most creative and intriguing process. Robert Pirsig realized that he could never run out of hypotheses. "He coined a law intended to have the humor of a Parkinson's law that 'The number of rational hypotheses that can explain any given phenomenon is infinite.' It pleased him never to run out of hypotheses."[1] Hence, the interviews constitute an empirical study to discover the richness of human thoughts and ideas with respect to education, teaching and evaluations. This study is empirical in nature, but with a qualitative focus.

Not as much has been written about qualitative research because these studies do not produce hard, quantitative evidence. Hard evidence is quantifiable fact, and fact is not in question. There is no reason to practice judgment with fact. Qualitative studies produce evidence that is always in question and forces us to practice judgment. Therefore, it is exactly that qualitative information about teaching and teachers which needs to be studied and judged. But we have to be careful about what happens to such studies.

"Perhaps it is because qualitative . . . research has been labeled 'unscientific' that so little has been written about it in

---

[1]Robert Pirsig, Zen and The Art Of Motorcycle Maintenance (New York: Bantam Books, 1974) p. 107.

the literature. . . ."[2] If we practice judgment with respect to teaching in higher education, it would seem that we need to evaluate the nonquantitative aspects of teachers. The ". . . blind research for quantifiable regularities in society can lead to ignorance of those aspects of man--the most important ones--."[3] It seems that ". . . for practical reasons, innumerable qualitative distinctions which are of vital importance for man and society are suppressed; they are not allowed to surface. Thus the reign of quantity celebrates its greatest triumphs. . . ."[4] A fair and logical question with qualitative studies becomes--so what? How do we evaluate such things? The answer is, of course, through the practice of judgment. However, results ". . . having (been) established by . . . purely quantitative methods (makes us) . . . unwilling, and generally unable, to face the question of whether this is to be taken as a good thing or a bad thing. It is of course true that quality is much more difficult to 'handle' than quantity . . . judgment is a higher function than the ability to count and calculate."[5]

But what usually happens, and this is why we must be careful about

---

[2]Danny N. Bellenger, Kenneth L. Bernhardt, Jac. L. Goldstucker. Qualitative Research in Marketing (Chicago: The American Marketing Association, 1976) p. vii.

[3]Ibid., p. 4.

[4]E. F. Schumacher, Small Is Beautiful (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1973) p. 45.

[5]Ibid., p. 48. Parentheses Added.

what happens to qualitative studies, is that the results are evaluated in terms of quantitative studies. That is, ". . . subjective analysis makes it difficult to compare results or to verify them statistically."[6] Qualitative research just doesn't stack up to quantitative codification, editing and interpretation. Qualitative studies take quantitative measurements and turn them on their head. For example, reliability is usually thought of as a universal understanding; validity is measuring what one believes needs to be measured. A qualitative study turns reliability from universal to particular; and validity becomes a question of whether we should set 'concrete' measures in advance of the study. To apply, to a qualitative study, the meter sticks of quantitative studies would be ruinous to the qualitative study. It is an 'open secret',[7] therefore, that ". . . techniques are being developed so that qualitative data can be quantified and subjected to a more systematic analysis."[8] For us ". . . to undertake to measure the immeasurable is absurd and constitutes but an elaborate method of moving from preconceived

---

[6]Bellenger, et. al., op. cit., p. 31.

[7]David Schuman, Bureaucracies, Organizations and Administration (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1976) p. 159.

[8]Bellenger, et. al., op. cit., p. 52.

notions to foregone conclusions. . . ."[9]

This is not meant to be an indictment of quantitative research. Such research has a place and needs to be understood in its place. But today we seem to have tipped the scales in the direction of only quantitative research. "Numbers can seduce us . . . we worship numbers. They have become our irrefutable standard. Through numbers, we passionately believe that insight and understanding will come into our lives."[10] The quantitative studies concerning evaluation of teachers in higher education abound. Yet, deans are still uncertain about evaluations. "Beware of conventional wisdom. It's a siren song that lulls you into complacency. Before you know it, you've become . . . another solution to a problem that America doesn't have."[11]

This work is a qualitative study about the world, education, teachers, teaching and quality. The qualitative interviews which follow will help us understand how these things may fit together and be judged. David Schuman tells us that there are three parts of a social analysis: 1. The event being studied; 2. The studier; and 3. The method used to do the study.[12] The event of evaluation has

---

[9]Schumacher, op. cit., p. 46.

[10]Calvin Hodock, "Hodock cites 'Pitfalls' of Marketing Research" Marketing News, June 1, 1979, p. 1.

[11]Calvin Hodock, "Intuition, Microstudies, Humanized Research can identify emotions that motivate consumers" Marketing News, March 19, 1982, p. 11.

[12]David Schuman, Policy Analysis, Education, and Everyday Life (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath and Company, 1982) p. 2.

been presented in previous chapters. The thought process provided a certain context and perspective. Now it is important to understand additional context and perspective, from others. "It seems to me that there should be some balance between the three parts . . . the data should not become the method; the individual doing the study should not become an instrument; the method should not be ignored or left out as being unimportant."[13]

"The trick is to begin with the individual, but have the study be something other than wholly personal and individualistic. The subject, then, becomes important. The subject . . . helps connect the individual to his or her world."[14] A dean who must judge teachers and their teaching would, then, want to know what quality or excellence means to teachers; ". . . one must understand both their way of seeing the world, and the world in which they are living."[15]

What follow are the stories of three teachers in higher education. It is obvious that the studier, the author of this work, will not be simply a recording device for attitudes, opinions and interests. The studier is very much a part of this study, ". . . there is an incipient interpersonal relationship between the interviewer and the respondent which establishes an intimate social atmosphere. . . ."[16] The studier is unable to establish, in advance,

---

[13]Ibid., p. 3. [14]Ibid., p. 5. [15]Ibid., p. 29.

[16]Bellenger, et. al., op. cit., p. 29.

any semblance of correct or appropriate meaning. "To find meaning . . . one must somehow study individuals as they seem to themselves and as they interact with the people and institutions around themselves."[17]

The three teachers were selected in accordance with previously recorded ratings on a particular standardized student evaluation form. One selection was a teacher who received a very high rating, one who received an average rating and one who received a very low rating. The interviews with the teachers focused on three major areas of interest:

1. Their attitudes toward the four central questions discussed in Chapters I and II. Specifically, what do these three teachers think education is?; what is teaching?; what qualifies one to teach?; and, are we doing a good job teaching? Their attitude toward the rating tool is also explored.
2. Reflections on their best teachers from higher education.
3. Whether their attitudes and reflections have made any difference in their teaching.

Much of what follows will be the words of the respondents, as they said them. Each respondent will be described along with a recounting of their significant reflections. However it is

---

[17]Schuman, Policy Analysis, Education, and Everyday Life, op. cit., p. 38.

important to our understanding, in a qualitative study, to read the respondent's own words rather than summarizing or paraphrasing. Summaries tend to stand in the way of meaning.

Jim. Jim is 39 years old and recently left his full-time tenured teaching position to become the Controller of a business. He had taught eight years full-time and three years part-time. Jim is an accountant with a C.P.A. certification. He does not hold a Ph.D. He also owns a small retail establishment in which he dispenses ice cream and other assorted foods and snacks. He also enjoys an accounting practice on the side, in which he prepares tax forms for individuals and other businesses. Jim is married and has two children, a son and daughter. Jim's interview took place in his office at his new company. He has a private office with no windows, a large executive desk and credenza. The office is quite large itself and also holds a conference table complete with chairs. The office appears fairly neat, particularly the desk. The conference table had several piles of company issued checks and corresponding paperwork attached. Jim talked with a calculated caution in his voice. He was the person chosen for having the lowest rating on the student evaluation form.[18]

---

[18]This particular form was one administered by the Evening Division of Western New England College during the academic year 1980-81. The rating scale that students were asked to use consisted of 1.0 to 5.0 with 5.0 being the 'best' rating. The total range for this form was 3.2 to 4.7 with a professor average of 4.1. Jim's score was 3.2, Len's score was 4.1 and Ron's was 4.7. All respondents' names have been disguised to maintain anonymity.

Jim never really was able to articulate what education was or should be. He seemed to have a sense of what it shouldn't be. "In other words, I don't think that education has to be fun. My own personal viewpoint is that in higher education today we are missing the mark, particularly in the small private schools. I think that we are so concerned about student retention and popularity that the objective of educating is sidetracked--put on the back burner. Well, as I see it, I think the attitude in the small private schools today is that the student is king and is to be coddled and treated most graciously and heaven forbid that a professor should upset . . . a student . . . which I think misses the objective. I think the objective is to convey knowledge to students in the most competent way possible."

Somewhere, mixed up in all of Jim's thoughts, learning to know and learning to do seem to be central. However, learning to do something is paramount. Jim thought that even a plumber needs to ". . . cover subject areas beyond the limited scope of the trade they intend to enter. Communications, perhaps history, some of the arts I see as highly relevant (for plumbers)." Learning to know something <u>is</u> an important part of all our education. But Jim has some specific ends in mind behind his thoughts for a more general education. What will be the payoff for the plumber? "Well, you will be better able to communicate with your customers and thus inspire higher fees and continue your activity with them." Education is a <u>useful</u> tool for Jim.

He explains teaching this way. "I think the faculty member has a responsibility of conveying knowledge to the student in the best way that he or she possibly can. The ability to convey cumulative knowledge within one's profession is what I view as competency. I can think of certain professors that I didn't personally care for, and yet I learned a great deal from. So I would have to conclude that they were competent because they accomplished their objective, which was to teach . . . the student." Jim believes that a teacher must blend the pragmatic with theoretical. "I think that one who emphasizes only the pragmatic and tends to disregard the theoretical would be doing the student a disservice. I see the blend as a positive thing."

Jim sets up some responsibilities for the student, also, in both education and teaching. "I think that the student should be expected to put into the educational environment as much as he takes from it. In other words, I see the responsibility on the part of the student to interact with fellow students and the instructor and I definitely don't feel that the student's position is to simply sit there and absorb discussions. It goes beyond that."

Jim was very specific with respect to what qualifies one to teach. "Firstly, I think the person needs a strong educational background himself, (an) academic background. I think that the person should have a range of experience in addition to the academic background. Most ideally persons that have been involved in a non-academic area that may be related to the individual's profession would tend to be

a better instructor than someone who was a pure academic, in that they can convey pragmatic, real life experiences. In accounting, I think a person with an undergraduate degree with a major within the profession, hopefully a Master's degree at a minimum, and some form of certification I think, in my judgment, makes a very good candidate for an academic slot. I guess what I'm leading to is that I don't see the Ph.D. as conclusive evidence of competency in teaching or education. I think it's very nice (the Ph.D.) and may be very useful, and I admire people that are pursuing it or have it, but I don't see . . . the absence of it as a detriment to a person performing the job very competently."

When asked whether or not we are doing a good job teaching, Jim was hesitant to answer yes or no. Once he had established qualifications to judge the competency of a teacher it now seemed to be a whole new question. "Clearly there is a need for evaluation. I don't think that any organization can cease their interaction with an individual once the individual is hired. I don't think we can simply turn someone loose, never review results and just assume the job is being done. Someone could be very, very competent and grossly irresponsible. If they have the knowledge and they can do the job, but for whatever reason they choose not to do so. (What is irresponsible is) . . . failing to meet with classes, curtailing classes, not holding up their other areas of responsibility, committee work, advising, whatever. So I guess you need some mechanism to police things, . . . to go beyond simply hiring a

party . . . and never taking a further look at the party."

Because of his own experience, Jim believes that students are not capable to judge a teacher's competence until they have matured in their profession. Therefore, "I have strong feelings against student evaluations. I am not terribly enthused about the idea of student evaluations . . . particularly where they are used as the major criteria for promotion or tenure or salary increments. I think they tend to inspire a give away attitude on the part of the faculty member. Why should I push, I might just as well give away the farm and everyone is fat, dumb and happy. The concern I have is that where the evaluation tool becomes the only . . . device . . . education then borders on prostitution and that really concerns me."

Jim is not totally against students doing evaluations of teachers however; "The usefulness I see with respect to student evaluations (is as) strictly a tool to a faculty member to convey feedback from students that the student may anonymously be willing to give, but openly might suppress." So how would Jim be able to judge who was doing a good job teaching? "I think one of the good indicators of whether an academic has done his job or not, to some extent, is the success that their students enjoy subsequently." Jim did understand that tying a particular student's success, whatever that may be deemed to be, to a particular teacher was nearly impossible.

In addition Jim said, "I think that any faculty member (who) enjoys the admiration of the truly good students is a good faculty member. When I say good students I mean students (who) are good

sound citizens, good academically, people who have their head screwed on."[19] This is clearly not a measure of quality.

In responding to the particular evaluation tool used to measure Jim's performance he said, "I think it is terribly limited. I didn't think that it was very useful. Frankly this particular tool I felt was doing a disservice, not only to faculty members, but also to future students. I think some future students would draw conclusions about a faculty member's ability based on published results of this, which I always felt were completely unrealistic and not indicative of the quality of the faculty member whatsoever. So, in effect, you do a disservice to a future student who might very well have learned something positively from the experience of the faculty member."

Jim had little trouble reflecting on whom he thought were his best teachers in higher education. It was as if these teachers made a lasting (or at least powerful) impression on him. "I can think of one individual in particular who was fussy or demanding to an almost absurd degree and at the time I would have to sit there and wonder why in the world is this individual so picky and precise? As I reflect back, I think I gained many qualities, from my association with the individual, that I can apply today. I can think (of this

---

[19] One could push this profile out to ridiculous ends and look for a student with a high grade point average, who made good sounds (of agreement?), and who had a peculiar looking neck.

experience) as having positively influenced my experience, my working habits; it was a positive thing. I didn't overwhelmingly like the individual."

"I can think of (another) particular (teacher) who . . . was not a terribly successful lawyer and yet taught a law course and simply did a super bang-up job with it. It was interesting because this person would not have been perceived as a competent lawyer and yet was just a magnificent instructor. He didn't fit the image of the Wall Street corporate lawyer, the Brooks Brothers suit, the Cadillac and the rest of it. (He) would convey the impression of a sleeze bag lawyer that people wouldn't necessarily look up to, and yet the guy did a great job as an instructor." When Jim had to put his finger on why this teacher was so good in the classroom he said, "Perhaps enthusiasm. Very obvious knowlege of a subject area, deep knowledge. No question about it. There was more than just the glossy ability to present, it was very definite knowledge. It was quality presentation." Jim believed that his two best teachers had had a bearing on his own performance in the classroom.

Jim has obviously become disillusioned with teaching in higher education, because he chose to leave it. It is interesting to note that he left teaching soon after a friend of his became the dean. Jim had pushed for his friend's appointment and was the champion of his friend's abilities. And then after his friend became dean, Jim was now being judged by his friend. Why did Jim leave? "Philosophically, frankly, I felt that our Ph.D. emphasis put me in

a second class citizenship, really. I was 39 years old and wasn't about to start a Ph.D. program." But Jim had received tenure and was secure in terms of that. "Well, that's assuming that tenure is the pinnacle of your life. I genuinely felt that I would never see full professorship and it would have been even doubtful that I would have seen an associate professorship. I guess I really resented working for a private institution that placed such an unwarranted emphasis on this graduate degree. I guess I'm the type of individual that seeks ongoing rewards of what I'm doing, acknowledgement from the administration. I never really felt that happened. I don't think they really have an appreciation for good people. I think they're incapable of knowing when they really have someone who is good."

Len. Len is 58 years old and has taught English for the past thirty years. He has published many articles, holds a Ph.D. in English and loves to travel. He is married and has two children, a boy and a girl. Len's wife recently published a book related to the Women's Movement. Len's interview took place in his private faculty office. The office was relatively small with no windows, except those looking out onto a hallway on the second floor of a classroom building. Len's office and desk were fairly cluttered, although Len knew just where everything was supposed to be. Len had been very anxious to be interviewed, seemingly because he was interested in an intellectual exchange with a colleague from the business area.

At one point in the interview Len suggested, it is believed facetiously, that he was telling the interviewer what he thought the interviewer wanted to hear.

Len was a former professor of the studier and was remembered as a very good teacher. There was clearly a fond anticipation toward this interview. When asked about what he thought education really was Len never hesitated a second. "It's kind of an interest in everything. It's trying to learn as much as you can about everything and never shutting your mind to any subject or any kind of knowledge you can get. I think education is just that, this curiosity, this willingness to pick up all information about every subject around the sun. The old Roman concept that nothing that is human is foreign to me. . . ."

Len seemed immediately troubled about education as a curiosity. "Today, in America, liberal education in most cases has somewhat diminished and is replaced by vocational education's coming forward. I think what is happening is that as we are becoming more vocational, we've dropped foreign languages, we begin to lose this concept of what the gentleman was, this British concept, the old world concept, just a person who knew a lot of things. I think that the narrowness can hurt conversation, it can hurt a lot of things. Narrowness is what I am trying to fight and I don't know if I can always do that." Len really meant, by his expression and the tone of his voice, that he <u>had</u> <u>been</u> fighting this for years. The passion with which he spoke and looked indicated his plight.

But Len understands the world in which he lives and works. "Learn your vocation, be a good accountant, but learn everything else while you're here. Many years ago you came from an upper class family (to be in college) and you went to one of these places, Oxford or Cambridge, it didn't matter what you studied. You studied classics like Latin or Greek or history and you normally had a job in government waiting for you. So the schooling you got had no direct relationship to the job you were going to take subsequently. On the other hand, in most colleges in (this) country, if you major in accounting there's a direct relationship, and most of the students feel . . . they want a job in the particular field of their major."

When Len was questioned about reports from corporate executives advising college students to study the liberal arts extensively, he said, "They say it, but they don't practice it when they hire people." Len believed that vocations were of major interest today. He also believed that the formal educational system has been created and strengthened around this notion. In the process we not only emphasize vocation, but we may squelch creativity and curiosity. "It does. Four years of one subject will drive out everything else. Sometimes I get into a hassle with students on this one. If I grade an English paper and I find a lot of grammar and spelling errors, I would give it a low grade. Some students would say to me, 'but the contents were good'. What they are saying to me is that by insistence on correctness I'm squelching their creativity. I used to get very angry and I would give a low grade with a nasty

note on the paper; you know, this is terrible!"

Len actually believed that he may have been responsible for turning off curiosity and creativity in the name of correctness. Yet both are important. "It's true, you have to be creative, you have to be correct and a lot of what I find, at least from many students, is they don't care. I heard one of the former Deans of the School of Business (become upset about this). He was teaching a seminar, in business, (with) 12 seniors and he came to lunch, almost in tears, and he said something like, 'gee, they're not even interested in this.' He was very unhappy."

Len thought that students needed to be curious. But education did not simply stop with students being curious. Education also involved teachers being curious. Len related the story of a friend of his who moved from high school teaching into college teaching. "He said the students at Springfield College were 100 times worse than the ones at Classical High, but his colleagues at Springfield College were 1,000 times more interesting than the ones at Classical, so sometimes education is more than the classroom. I think . . . one of the funs of being here is that I learn from the people I work with and I hope the students will too."

Len didn't think it was only the current group of college students who were narrow. "Those of us who have doctorates (think) vocation. When you get it, you go for it in the hopes that you become a college professor. You do not go for it to merely satisfy your own curiosity."

Len didn't hesitate at all when asked what he believed teaching was all about. "I think you have to like your own subject very much. You have to be very enthusiastic . . . and hopefully get the students so interested in the subject . . . that they will want to learn more. Teaching is the process by which you do that and, of course, the personality comes in and I think we're all actors in the classroom. I might be a little more flamboyant in the classroom. So I think that's almost number one. I think the teacher has to like the students and they have to know this, that there's a warmth, not an enmity or a hostility . . . I think if you can get all those together, you're teaching. Jacques Barzun, in The Art of Teaching, once said, and I like this quote: 'The research person who writes professional articles must be 100% accurate even if he is not 100% interesting, but the classroom teacher must be 100% interesting even if he is not 100% accurate'. . . ."

Teaching also seemed to be an attitude, in addition to the relationship with students. Larry Nath (a former dean) used to say . . . that at a school . . . we are all tailors. In the one case the Harvard tailor gets a bolt of silk (and) makes a suit of silk; we get muslin and we make a suit of muslin. I think, too, we take our subjects a lot more seriously than the students do, whether they are majoring in them or not. I also think you need a damn good sense of humor so you (won't) be overwhelmed. I think I get along well with about 95% of the students and I think that some of my curiosity, or let's say interest in other subjects, spills over. I think they know this."

What else did Len think teaching involved? "I think, also, another responsibility that I'm getting into now, or at least seeing, is with peers or with other teachers, (an) interacting. Some new teachers come to me periodically for advice about politics . . . and things like that. Of course I've been here so long. I had you as a student. Then too, a certain amount of committee work, but not too much. I've got that Thoreau saying up there (pointing to a framed quotation on his wall) 'Man is rich in proportion to the number of things he can afford to let alone.' I think I try to avoid too much committee work, yet I'm stuck on a couple."

It was a curious interview with Len. He never seemed to hesitate on his answers. They flowed easily from him and were usually well thought out. What qualifies one to teach? "Someone once said, for college, four words: brains, brains, brains, brains. I don't know where I ran into that. I don't think you can be a college professor and be an idiot, really. I think you have to be bright. (Bright), then strong knowledge of one's own subject and then I would say warmth, enthusiasm, things of that nature." Nowhere in these qualifications did Len mention academic degrees. "Degrees get you the job at college, but does not make you a teacher. A degree is the union card and there have been cases of people who have been very good teachers without degrees."

It seemed appropriate and important to understand how Len would identify the qualifications for a teacher. "I don't think I would make him lecture to a group of deans or things like that. That would

scare the hell out of me, personally. I think I would just talk to him for a couple of hours, walk around campus with him and see how he reacts, maybe even have lunch. I think you can get a feel and would talk to him about a lot of subjects, not just about the particular subject in question. I would have a lot of faculty members do that, small conversations, the way we're talking now, not these big horrendous lectures. I think you learn a lot from a conversation . . . just walking around talking. You pick up a lot of vibes."

Overall Len believed that we are doing a good job teaching. The issue of judging, or measuring, good teaching was unhesitantly addressed. "Only by the students. One way, I think, is their reactions in the classroom. Do they fall asleep when you are presenting; do they show interest? Another way, I think, is . . . after they graduate. How do they behave in the world at large? What are they doing . . . what are they talking about? That type of thing would be a way of measuring."

"Supposedly when you come out of college . . . you can handle things better than a person who never went to college. I don't know if it's because you are four years older, or something we have given you, but there is a difference and it's that difference that you want to pin down. You can pick and choose and hopefully you'll throw off comic books, although at times I read comic strips too, and maybe read Shakespeare occasionally. It's that type of thing. There are differences. The attitude is, when you finish college you

should be able to enjoy the Jack and Harry Piels commercial without necessarily drinking the product. In other words, a different outlook, and that's how I would measure education. If you come here and (leave having) exactly the same prejudices, exactly the same attitudes, then we have not done it. . . ."

It seems that Len would determine whether or not we are doing a good job by highly subjective ways. "Word of mouth. After a student is here a year, he knows the teachers. So if you have four sections of one course and one teacher gets 35 (students) and one gets 3, that tells us something. If a . . . teacher is very awkward, unable to speak . . . in other words if I made a lot of grammatical errors speaking to you now, as an English teacher, I'd say that's pretty bad. I would know enough to ask questions and if he (a teacher) showed enthusiasm while he were talking to me, I would say good, he's a good teacher. If he didn't want to talk about it because it's a lousy subject, I would wonder why in hell he's teaching geology. There are ways of feeling that."

Len was asked to respond to the evaluation tool which led to him being interviewed in the first place. He believed the evaluation tool made some sense. What if a dean looked at this particular tool? How would Len react if he received no merit pay because he was rated average by the students? "O.K. I would accept that, if it were the only criterion. If there would have to be ratings. I'm not so sure they would have to be. Some of my colleagues are saying that I'm going to give all A's and become real popular and tell good

jokes, and I'll get merit. There's more to life than that. (Besides, students) . . . can only judge, as I mentioned, enthusiasm (and) things like that. They can't judge too much else. I don't think. Remember, there's a big subjective element here and any attempt to objectify it is not a good idea. You see, I think we are tending to reduce everything to statistics and I resent it. (If) I were afraid of my job I would be pandering to students constantly. . . ." But students did judge Len using this particular evaluation tool and deans did make merit decisions based on it. "(Students have) . . . a subjective feeling, it doesn't mean anything else. That's not perfect, but . . . what I think some people fear is that administrators are going to use the ratings . . . to punish us, to change our way of handling things. . . ."

Well, Len was willing to accept the rating, if there had to be one. "But you see, Lee, it would become a popularity contest. I know two people . . . in the School of Engineering . . . who told me . . . they're going to change their styles, not because they want to, but because they don't want this (punishment) to happen again, and I think that's bad. But that's what's happening. We're supposed to pick them (students) up to our level, not vice versa and that (punishment) would be an abuse of . . . ratings. For full professor they (administrators) are going to make 'great' teaching one of the important criteria. Now how do you 'prove' great teaching other than, I'm going to bring up (a rating) with a 95 percentile and say, 'look at me, I'm a great teacher.' That's what is going to be

happening."

But Len was rated as 'average' by students and in relation to all of his colleagues. What did that mean? "If we're within the average, most of us were very complacent. If we fell within the average on that (particular evaluation tool), we didn't care." Does that mean, then, that the best is to be average? "No, the safest is to be average. That's why I say when you're average you feel more complacent, it isn't bothering you any more, you're in the mainstream as it were."

Len believed that faculty have to be evaluated by administrators and that faculty have a responsibility to inform the administrators of what they are doing. A self evaluation, of sorts, is required.[20] "I have to make it sound interesting. What do I do, say I went to class and I smiled?" Len was asked to do a self evaluation of his teaching from the point of view of students and administrators. He believed students would say, "Great, no. Good, yes. I think administrators would consider me pretty competent and doing my job."

Len was asked whether or not he wanted to be a 'great' teacher. "Not any more. No. (It) may take too much effort. In other words, I would like to do other things. I no longer feel I have to 'prove'

---

[20]Len showed me one of his recent self evaluations. To me it seemed to be a story of his summer travels. Len quickly reminded me that it related to his courses though.

myself . . . I'm getting in the role of semi-elder statesman as opposed to young, aspiring, great teacher. Wisdom may come with age, but the ability to put it across is not as it had once been. I'm not deadwood . . . but what I'm saying is that the fire[21] is not as deep as it had been, say 20 years ago. . . ."

When Len was asked to reflect on his best teachers in higher education, he became very quiet. He seemed to be thinking. He tried to say a few things, but stopped in the middle of thoughts. He was extremely hesitant for the first time in the interview. Len attempted to reflect in general ways and immediately began to compare himself to these general reflections. "I think the best teachers I had were very nice, quiet guys, really warm individuals, friendly, who answered your questions. None punitive, although I am sometimes, myself, when teaching. They showed interest in me as a student; I thought that was important. The teachers I remember are the ones who communicated. I can think of one who gave a lecture, the same one, twice and we didn't say a damn word to him about it." Len thought that some teachers were distinctive. "When I use the word distinctive . . . I mean somebody whom you remember as being unordinary in the classroom, for whatever reason. Now, sometimes they could be distinctive and not be good teachers."

---

[21]Len had been known to eat fire and eat glass in his classes. Len said he did it to, ". . . show off. I don't do it any more. I was becoming known, not as a teacher, but as a fire eater and that was stupid."

Len was pushed when asked again if he could reflect on any particular teachers whom, he thought, were his best teachers. He took more silent time to reflect. He appeared to be working very hard to remember. Finally Len said, "No, I had a lot of competent ones, but not really, not in the sense that you're asking."

Ron. Ron is 39 years old and has been teaching for seventeen years. He is an industrial engineer, holds a Ph.D. in that subject, and a few years ago he became the Assistant Dean of the School of Engineering. Ron is also married with two children, a boy and a girl. Ron's interview was held in his private office. He has a comfortable and relatively spacious office. In one corner of the office is a floor to ceiling window covered completely by a drapery. Ron was chosen for the interview as a result of scoring the very highest on his student evaluation form. He is simply a very likeable human being. He laughs often, has a pleasant smile, is confident, yet reserved. Ron had prepared for the interview by writing a list of notes and topics to discuss. At the end of the initial interview Ron remarked at how he had hardly consulted his notes at all.

When asked what he thought education was, Ron immediately described education as a profession. It seemed to Ron that education was simply a dispensing of technical and professional knowledge. "I guess what I am thinking about . . . is an occupation. You're either in education, business or some other type of occupation, you get paid for what you do. So right away I think of education. I

guess in one way you can look at education as a business enterprise. I've seen the education process compared to a manufacturing facility, where you get the raw material in, which are the students. You have many operations that they go through, you have quality control checks, the exams, rejected material, sent out to be reprocessed, things like that. Finally you have the end product, but it can be compared to manufacturing. When I think of education as an engineer, I think of processing, not like a liberal arts person may think." It's quite obvious that Ron believes in and understands education as a process. He may realize that other notions of education exist, but he does not seem willing to acknowledge and/or be concerned with such notions.

Ron was asked to think about some of these notions, particularly curiosity and informal education. Ron held strong to his ideas about education as a process and particularly, formal education. "Formal is a situation, (pauses) not comedy, (laughs) but a situation where the environment would be created primarily for that purpose. Many doors might be closed to the individual without the formal education. I think they would always be in a position where they would have to prove themselves. Because in my position here,[22] . . . students come in with a lot of practical experience, working out in industry for 10 or 12 years, no formal education, . . . want to try to get

---

[22]Students who wish to transfer credit from other colleges or experiences are required to consult with their Assistant Dean.

credit for their practical experience. They've had some experience in machine design, (and ask) why can't I get credit for machine design? They have to prove themselves, they have to go through the formal setting, testing and everything else."

Ron was not to be swayed from his notion of education. He understood that other ideas existed. "But I would think only as an engineer would think, it's all technical knowledge and it seems like it is more difficult to get on your own than the other type. Maybe it's because my education is limited to the technical subjects . . . without that regimented, rigid education you would have some difficulty. Of course all my education has been in engineering and that's all I know."

It was almost a forewarned and foregone conclusion that if Ron believed so strongly about education as a process, then certainly teaching would be an integral part of that process. In addition, it seems that a teacher is a processor of technical information and advice. Ron believed that a teacher was an information dispenser, much in the way a hot dog vendor dispenses hot dogs. The teacher was to be, as Ron put it, '. . . transmitting the information.' What, then, is the necessity of hiring human beings to do this? Why not simply find a good, human teacher and videotape him or her? That way all engineering students could be taught by a 'good' teacher and whatever that good teacher did well will be preserved forever. "The complete absence of the teacher I can't comprehend, at this point, (perhaps sometime soon though?) as being effective.

The person is needed to answer questions, by the students, on finer[23] points and reclarification of the material which is presented."

What role does a student play in this education and teaching process? "Of course, doing the work and whatever is being assigned, in order that they get the full benefit out of the learning experience. The students . . . question more, probe more, ask for reclarifications and things like that, so there is a student's responsibility."

Ron was asked to determine what qualifies a person to teach in his conception of an educational process. "I look primarily to some indicator that the person is qualified, in terms of knowledge of the material, competence in the material, based on our system. Now the union card at this point, is the degree (Ph.D.)." Does this mean that a person who has a Ph.D. degree in mechanical engineering is assumed to be competent and qualified to teach? "Absolutely. Especially so if the degree is from a college (that) has professional accreditation."

It seems that if engineers have a formal education, and especially a Ph.D. degree, they automatically are competent and qualified to teach. It almost seems unnecessary to worry about evaluations with respect to such a person. "Of course the evaluation always continues either by colleagues, administrators or students. The educational development and the degrees give them an entree into a teaching

---

[23]It's interesting how one word can mean so many different things. The finer things of life revolve around a set of judgments based on moral, ethical and aesthetic considerations. My sense is that Ron's finer point simply means more precision, with a quantitative emphasis.

position, but the evaluation continues and will always continue. (This is done) in order to determine that the previous evaluation was accurate and just to satisfy one's own mind on that." It seems that even those with a formal education must keep proving themselves over and over.

How would Ron say we are doing in education? Are we doing a good job teaching and how do we judge such things? "By knowing the faculty, knowing their abilities. Of course in my position, as Assistant Dean, I am getting a lot more information via the students than the regular faculty would be getting based on the competence of the instructor, or instruction, they are getting in the classroom. I look at the publications. I look at the faculty . . . and see what they are doing in terms of their professional development and, on the whole, I'd say they're (students) getting a hell of an education in engineering. I place myself in the position of being evaluator, I can make a subjective opinion, I would say in general, not in all areas, we're doing a real good job in education. Which ones in particular? I guess I have a feeling somewhere in the liberal arts area we're not, but it's just a different type of body of knowledge for me. (In) other engineering schools, I perhaps could (tell) by their stature and what I hear and some of the information on some of their graduates."

Ron believes that student feedback can be utilized to measure whether or not we are doing a good job teaching. He likes student evaluations, such as the Student Instructional Report (SIR)

developed by Educational Testing Service's John Centra. "It's objective, of course, and can be compared to other individuals. It's the student's perception at least . . . schemes like the SIR's can be compared nationally, by department. In fact, they give you so much data you can get bogged down in it. That would show at least a minimum level of competence. I would look at that as saying that if they're average or above, the minimum level anyways, and then hopefully for outstanding the two or three standard deviations to the right. You would (also) be looking for other information. Probably consistency of the individual (to) always perform at a high level. (The) individual's ability to go across the board, like from Freshmen all the way up to Graduate level work, all sorts of size classes and to be able to do an outstanding job, at least comparatively with the SIR's. Maybe some outstanding student awards (laughs) or something like that which, hopefully, aren't a popularity contest (laughs). But other than having some student evaluations, on an informal basis, the dean's office will basically hear more student complaints than praises, . . . they don't come to praise Caesar. They come in and give you all the negative. So the faculty member would have to present some counter evidence, or some indication, that they are doing an acceptable job."

It seems as though Ron is uncomfortable judging whether or not we are doing a good job teaching and, as a result, turns over responsibility to teachers to prove themselves good teachers. "As an engineer, that's inherent. (It) goes with the turf, looking for

numbers, looking for something objective because I really don't feel comfortable with just going subjective either, though. I would rather a combination of the two, but I lean heavier toward the objective."

Ron was rated the highest of some 30 to 40 different teachers on the evaluation tool used to choose respondents for this study. What did he think of this tool? "I thought it was adequate to identify the individuals that are doing an acceptable, or minimum, level of competency in delivering the material." Ron admitted that this student rating tool did not identify quality teaching as well as the SIR might. When asked how he would recognize quality, Ron paused for a few minutes. "By my practical experience working on projects and knowing what is perceived to be a good quality job. . . ." Interestingly, that practical experience has little value toward academic credit, but much value in identifying quality teaching.

But quality, as we determined in previous chapters, is a difficult thing to ascertain. "It depends on quality, you have different quality characteristics when you look at a particular item. Quality-wise, in terms of the neatness and presentation of the information, it could be superb quality. In terms of technical content it could be below standard. It might have 2 of the 3, but if it doesn't have all three (characteristics) it certainly couldn't be classified as good quality."[24] Ron attempted to identify quality

---

[24]I have trouble understanding the apparent problem created by the notion of 'bad' quality. It is simply a quality job or not. The two words, bad quality, seem to negate each other.

characteristics for a good teacher. The words he used were, 'being organized, being structured and being consistent.' "I would say that those are some (things) you should strive for. You'll be better off in the long run and be a more effective teacher. . . ." We have certainly heard the characteristics before. All these ideas, such as consistent, structured and striving are part of our liberal tradition.

Ron reflected on his best teachers in higher education. He thought about this in a general, basic way. Then Ron identified an undergraduate and graduate teacher he thought were his best teachers. "Well, the ones I thought were best, I guess to be honest with myself, I looked for fairness, fairness on exams and quizzes. The ones that seemed prepared, prompt and got the information across, that I was able to understand, were receptive to my questions and inquiries during the class and didn't put me down; those are the ones, I felt, who were pretty good teachers. There was one (best) in calculus. His name was Nailor. He didn't have a doctorate, he had a Master's degree. I really worked hard, but this guy Nailor, who was in his early fifties, seemed to get the material across where it was more understandable to me than it was my previous semester. His exams were fair, not necessarily easy, he graded you fair and I did fairly well in the course. His classes were always well attended and people sought after his sections." Ron indicated that he thought there was some question of his best teacher receiving tenure, but he thought he did receive it. Would Ron give his best

teacher tenure now? "Different story now. What has the individual done in terms of professional development, how have they kept up with their discipline, have they published, have they presented papers? The teaching aspects are just assumed.[25] The perception has changed. I'm doing a good job in the classroom. That's in the classroom, what else have you done? You can't just rely on your teaching . . . because that's starting to get passe. Just good teaching won't cut it in the future." We are led to believe that Ron would not give tenure to his best undergraduate teacher. It is as though Ron became very human and subjective when reflecting on his best teacher, but very objective when asked to judge.

Ron reflects on his best graduate teacher. "His name was Sadowsky, he was Polish of course (laughs).[26] He was thorough, the course wasn't as restricted or regimented as the other courses. This was the final course in a particular subject material. The way he handled it you could take it as a fast pace, slow pace, we varied and just the way the course was handled was very impressive. I will say that on the graduate level they become a little more lax or not as consistent or regimented. . . ." It is very interesting

---

[25]If teaching is <u>just</u> assumed, then why all the flap over student evaluations? It seems as though teaching is not central to the position of a faculty member.

[26]Ron is also of Polish descent.

that Ron's best graduate teacher was not utilizing the quality characteristics Ron had established.

It was obvious that Ron was very weary from the interview process. When asked about whether or not his best teachers made any difference, he responded, "Yes, in a teaching sense." But that sense was never explained. Tensions seem to be clearly surrounding Ron, but being objective and specialized makes it easy for him to ignore the tensions. The tensions are not reduced, nor eliminated. The narrowness Len has been fighting seems to be very prevalent in Ron, and to a lesser degree in Jim.

> "More than at any other time in history mankind faces a crossroads. One path leads to despair and utter hopelessness. The other to total extinction. Put in its simplest form, the problem is: How is it possible to find meaning in a finite world, given my waist and shirt size?"[27]

If we are narrow in our approach to, and understanding of, education, teaching and qualifications we run into a danger. That danger is to mock the importance of judging, and the people being judged, by putting everything into its simplest form.

What we have here are three teachers with quite different and complex world views. Somehow we have to sort through all these

---

[27]Woody Allen, "My Speech to the Graduates," New York Times, p. A25, August 10, 1979.

views to be able to judge teaching and teachers. There is a general uneasiness deans must overcome in the process of judging. Much of this uneasiness comes from the complexity of humanness and the different world views. It is important, when judging teachers, to keep in mind the varied and diverse viewpoints which can emanate from a group of unique, individual teachers. Particular human experiences lead us toward particular and complex judgments, not simple solutions or answers.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS: REACTIONS, IDEAS AND A POSSIBLE SOLUTION

Recall that the purpose behind rethinking evaluation of teaching in higher education is to move away from the frustrations of a single evaluation tool and back toward the seriousness of judging teachers. A single, standardized evaluation tool establishes an ideal to which most teachers cannot, or do not wish to conform. This tool also establishes a schematic of a teacher which does not even meet the desires of most deans. (It may be easy to use, but does not necessarily provide us with a good teacher.)

It is the purpose of this work to help deans, who struggle daily with the issue of evaluations. First, is a discussion of several approaches or reactions deans take toward evaluations. Second, is specific advice to deans so that they might approach evaluations within a particular framework of ideas. Third, is a thought experiment which outlines a possible approach to the essentials in an evaluation process.

Assumptions are necessary and inherent to any discussion, and it is assumed here that deans are genuinely concerned about judging teachers. It may be that some deans will treat evaluations as a necessary evil, to be dispensed with as quickly as possible. This is, perhaps, an understandable reaction to the enormous frustration experienced over evaluations. However, the propensity to 'finish' the evaluation process should not be misconstrued as not caring about

evaluations. Deans who are very comfortable and confident about the way they evaluate teaching may be the worst cases. Worst because these deans may have settled into a single tool methodology that appears accurate and satisfactory. Therefore, if there is no discomfort or tension present in the evaluation process, there is no reason to rethink evaluations.

Certainly there are some deans who become serious about evaluations when a particular organizational decision is imminent, such as tenure or promotion. These deans have good reason to become serious at this point in time. Not only is this an important decision from the point of view of the teacher and the college or university, but the deans know that they will be judged at the same time. Therefore, a genuine concern for judging teachers becomes the genuine concern about being judged. In the political realms of our world we see policies determined by aggressive self interest, in the form of both elected officials and lobby groups. The aggressive self interests of deans can overshadow the fact that teachers are human beings in the process of being evaluated or judged.

There are some deans who approach evaluations in a very cautious, troubled consternation. Frankly, they don't like to be put in the position of judging others. Some deans are simply afraid to judge 'lest they be judged'. The religious overtones here indicate that only God can, in the end, judge. Or, some deans may just be so sensitive toward the issues involved that they stall, or abort, the process while dwelling on all the negative consequences they may

inflict on others. It seems that being serious about evaluations can cause some deans to approach evaluations in such a way that they are stifling to their colleagues. Inaction, and inability to judge, in the evaluation process can stifle both teachers, in their academic pursuits, and the college's or university's decisions.

Hopefully then, these concluding thoughts can be instructive to most deans regardless of how they currently approach the process of evaluation. Of course, there will be some deans who simply can't, or won't, find any of these notions helpful. If there is no tension involved when judging teachers and teaching, then there is probably no reason to rethink what we are, or should be, doing.

The advice and ideas offered here are done so in a helpful spirit. There will not be any single page exhibits or models to copy and show other deans or teachers. There will not be a machine-like system which can be turned on and off at will, oiled vigorously at appropriate intervals and then left on its own to do the work of evaluation and judging. What will be offered is a pragmatic rethinking of some common tensions and dilemmas faced by deans in their struggle with evaluations. This rethinking rests on ideas and feelings toward human beings, with the goal of reducing the tensions and frustrations of evaluations. "Mechanical arrangements have their place, but we live by feelings and ideas. . . ."[1]

---

[1]"End-of-the-Century Question," MANAS (Los Angeles: Manas Publishing Company, June 1, 1983) p. 7.

Advice To Deans

It seems appropriate to provide some specific help right away. As such, this help should provide us with a simple framework to allow deans to position themselves within the evaluation process. When studying debated issues, not only about evaluations but all issues, a series of divergent viewpoints show up as differences in attitude or position. When we appear in public we are often judged by our attitude. Therefore, attitude is important when being judged and in judging. An attitude is a position which reflects not only a viewpoint, but a person's entire demeanor. To rethink evaluations we must be sure that, as deans, we begin the process with the correct attitude. The simple framework provided here helps us to begin evaluations with the right attitude. For those deans who work in large, bureaucratic universities and, perhaps, don't even know some of the teachers in their own school, the right attitude would mean becoming much more serious about the evaluation process. These deans may back away and say that they have too many other organizational issues to deal with. It seems that evaluating teachers would be much more serious and important than attending meetings on fiscal responsibility.

In contrast, there are some deans who attempt to dictate what a teacher ought and ought not to be doing. "For example, Alexander the Great, having conquered the known world, went to visit Diogenes, the Greek philosopher, and said, 'What can I do for you, my good

man?' Diogenes told the mighty emperor, 'Only stand out of my light.' Even if we are as powerful as Alexander himself, we have got to learn to stand out of peoples' light and let them do the work of the world."[2] This seems like an obvious attitude to maintain, yet on reflection we may believe it is easier said than done. Regardless, it is important to pursue this attitude. Deans need to stand out of the light of teachers.

Deans tend to act out their supervisory role as a master tradesman responds to aspiring apprentices. There are some important differences however. Apprentices have turned themselves over to the master tradesman for the purpose of working with and learning a particular type of work. Creativity is not expected, norcondoned, of the apprentice. Once apprentices have met all the requirements necessary for the trade and have gone off on their own, then they may be creative and advance the trade in their own ways. A dean does not have to be a master teacher in order to become a dean. And, most teachers are not serving an apprenticeship to become a dean, ". . . the dean ought never to regard himself as a super-teacher."[3] Therefore, it is inappropriate for a dean to try to

---

[2]David B. McCall, "Solve Business Problems With New Management Attitudes," Marketing News (Chicago: The American Marketing Association, March 18, 1983) p. 1.

[3]David G. Mobberley and Myron F. Wicke, The Deanship of the Liberal Arts College (Nashville: Board of Education, The Methodist Church, 1962) p. 56.

direct the work of a teacher, which work is probably unrelated to the work of a dean or other teachers. There are, of course, deans who can direct the work of some teachers and be very helpful in the process. But this is an exception. In most cases it would help keep evaluations in perspective if deans let teachers do their own work, using whatever creative thought is available.

Whenever deans think about judging teaching, they must think in positive ways. It seems that evaluations may deteriorate into witch hunts. The evaluation process becomes one of finding out what's wrong with people and trying to correct those things. A student was asked by a dean to evaluate the teaching of one particular teacher, who was being considered for tenure. The student responded with a positive description of all the good work of the teacher, at which point the dean asked the student for something negative about the teacher. The dean said, 'There must be something you don't like about the teacher, something he does wrong; it can't be all positive.'[4] "It is interesting that the Japanese do not use appraisals of their employees, appraisals cherished by American(s) . . . the Japanese . . . view is that 'appraisals are only concerned with bringing out a man's faults and weaknesses. What we need to know are the strengths of the man and what he can

---

[4]An actual example. Another teacher asked for feedback on his teaching by giving his classes an extra credit essay for feedback. If the students did not list negatives and positives they would not receive any extra credit.

do.'"[5]

It is very important that deans accentuate the positive in judging teachers. We should be asking ourselves, 'What are the good, positive characteristics of this teacher?' and then dwell on the positives. It seems that people tend to do things well when it is of their own doing or making. Therefore, left to do their own work, it may be that teachers will do that work very well. "We count as worth doing what we do voluntarily, not what we are made to do."[6]

Deans need to understand that their role is to serve teachers, not rule them. When deans speak of their faculty, teachers somehow become less than human, or, at best, subjects of the ruler. It is a fact that, ". . . some chieftains of U. S. industry talk about, 'their people making their products', as if the employees were 'members of an inferior species'."[7] It is imperative that deans think about how teachers can be served in order to do their work better. Deans need to find ways to cut through organizational, fiscal and other roadblocks to a teacher's work. This is the important work of deans and needs constant emphasis. "The dean will dedicate himself to the improvement of conditions of faculty

---

[5]McCall, op. cit., p. 16.

[6]MANAS, op. cit.

[7]McCall, op. cit. As a business teacher I make sure students understand this attitude and what it means.

service . . . (and) keep the routines of his office running smoothly so that the work of teaching and learning may proceed without unnecessary obstacles."[8] Deans need to have an instinct for letting people do their own work, they also need to stress the positive during evaluations and find ways to serve teachers, within the institutional unit. In order to do all this deans have to have a love and concern for education, teaching and teachers, rather than an ability to 'manage' or 'administer'.

The framework for positioning a dean in the evaluation process needs one more element to make the framework create right attitudes. That is the element of sincerity. Too often when a new idea becomes popular, sincerity goes by the wayside and other ideas are ignored or merely given lip service. The framework, or attitudes, for positioning deans is worthless without sincerity. Deans have to do more than talk a good game. To be sincere we must believe in and practice this framework. We need to adopt these attitudes as part of us, personally. The attitudes must become part of our mind-set and be integrated into our daily actions. Sincerity means not being pretentious in our attitudes.

If we plan to reduce the tensions about evaluations we must take a position following this framework. We should adopt these attitudes fully, with completeness and honesty. There will be organizational and institutional tugs at these attitudes, which will

---

[8]Mobberley, op. cit., pp. 41, 43, parenthesis added.

be discussed later. Deans need something to believe in, such as the attitudes presented here, and to carry forward toward judging teachers and teaching.

A Malaise of Trends and Traps

It is valuable to begin the evaluation process with the right attitude, especially when deans come up against the trends and traps involved in higher education and evaluations. There is an unsettling feeling when we attempt to keep the proper perspective, that is when we try to hold on to the right attitude in the face of seemingly conflicting information. Once deans have personally resolved the notions presented in this framework, their next hurdle is to maintain those notions throughout a barrage of other ideas. Or, if deans have difficulty maintaining the right attitude (letting people do their own work, being positive, serving teachers and being sincere about it) then they must somehow rethink, again, where they fit into this whole thing we call evaluation of teaching in higher education.

The trick here, or answer, is to keep the proper perspective. Such a simple thing to say, yet an evaluation process depends on keeping one's perspective. A story was told about the college freshman who wrote her parents a letter before coming home for summer break. She began the letter by apologizing for not writing sooner. She had been very busy lately since she got out of the hospital. She cautioned her parents that she was fine and had only received some contusions. She had recovered fully from the concussion

received in the fall from the dormitory window during the beer blast. But it was O.K., she reflected, the doctors assured her the fall did not affect her pregnancy. Then this coed apologized for shocking her parents with all this news. She advised them that she had not been in the hospital, there was no party and no fall and she was not pregnant. She had flunked a college course and wanted her parents to keep things in perspective.[9] Deans have to put things in perspective initially and then hold on tight to that perspective during evaluations.

The scenario goes like this:

Deans develop a perspective (the right attitude) toward evaluations, but soon they run up against institutional demands (decisions about promotions, tenure, merit pay) and they also read what's going on in other colleges and universities. There is always a tension working on deans to be trendy in their approach to evaluations. In other words, it is difficult to keep one's perspective. This is difficult for several reasons. We are most familiar with decision making as a choice between two alternatives. A decision becomes choosing this or that, A or B. If there are several alternatives presenting themselves, we tend to reduce the alternatives until we have the two best.

Many multiple choice examinations are based on this idea. A statement or question is followed by five alternative answers

---

[9]A story related as part of a sermon by Kenneth Campbell, Rector of the Church of Epiphany in Wilbraham, Massachusetts in the Fall of 1982.

(a, b, c, d and e). Usually there are two answers that can be deciphered, one of which is correct (deemed the best) and the other answer is close to being correct. Also, a trend today is to utilize computers to aid in decision making. Anyone who has studied the workings of machine language in computers understands the binary system utilized, i.e. switches are either on or off. To build a computer you must live and believe in a binary way. For example, ". . . engineers do have a professional code. Among its tenets is the general idea that the engineer's right environment is a highly structured one, in which only right and wrong answers exist. It's a binary world; the computer might be its paradigm. And many engineers seem to aspire to be binary people within it. No wonder. The prospect is alluring. It doesn't matter if you're ugly or graceless or even half crazy; if you produce right results in this world, your colleagues must accept you."[10]

It's not only engineers who tend to be binary people, we all do. Recall, from the discussion of the liberal tradition in America from Chapter II, that the notion of balance was to resolve distorted emphases. In actuality the notion of balance, in our liberal tradition, means choosing <u>one</u> idea and having that idea become a dominant one in society. Perhaps all this has led to a situation where we tend to reject various ideas in favor of one dominant idea, usually a current trend. Our inability to keep more than one

---

[10]Tracy Kidder, <u>The Soul of a New Machine</u> (New York: Avon Books, 1981) p. 146.

thought in our mind at once is a stifling situation. Not only do deans need to break out of this binary world, they need to truly balance trends and tensions, that is weigh ideas presented against their perspective. Deans need to learn to live with contradictions in ideas, people and life. Being comfortable with contradictions takes much work and concern.

If deans adopt the right attitudes, and mindfully keep these in perspective as they accomplish evaluations and/or review new ideas, it could have much effect. The effect would be felt in at least two ways: (1) deans would be on the cutting edge of all good work being done, and (2) prudent judgment would be preserved. Firstly, balance that rejects all ideas but one dominant idea is stifling to us and to our work. Balance, however, that is thought of as reviewing (weighing) ideas with one's perspective can lead us to recognize good work. The latter notion of balance allows us to live and experience the world without stifling us or our ability to view different people, and the positives of their work. Secondly, we must preserve prudent judgment when evaluating teachers. "A cultivated mind, Arendt explained . . . eschews absolutes and extremes that endanger prudent judgment. . . ."[11]

Things like attitude, perspective and trends have to be taken seriously by deans. It is a worthy undertaking to try to keep people alive in their thinking. Perhaps some of the more common trends or tensions can be reviewed, in some depth, to illuminate

---

[11]Joseph Epstein, ed., MASTERS: Portraits of Great Teachers (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1981) p. 198.

this process and, at the same time, try to help deans resolve these issues. As a result of our binary world most tensions are present in the form of dichotomies. We know that our job is not to decide the one, best alternative. Rather, we should balance the ideas with an appropriate perspective or attitude.

Some Common Tensions

1. Who should evaluate? There is a trend today toward having teachers do self evaluations as part of an evaluation process. Some deans are carrying this out as far as they can and saying that teachers will not be given tenure, promotions or merit pay, unless they can prove that they are good teachers. This attitude clearly reflects the level of frustration deans experience in trying to judge who is and who isn't a good teacher. But, at the same time, this attitude shifts the onus of responsibility for judging from deans to teachers. It is the job of deans to evaluate the teaching of their respective areas. Deans cannot, in good conscience, choose to have teachers evaluate themselves. "The dean must . . . bear responsibility for developing . . . a program of faculty appraisal."[12]

Likewise, it is not prudent judgment when deans evaluate teachers on their own, without some kind of consultation with the teachers. Hence, self evaluations by teachers, in whatever form, are appropriate and helpful. A teacher's self evaluation allows

---

[12]Mobberley, op. cit., p. 56.

deans to begin to know the work of teachers and the importance each teacher places on that work. Deans can easily view the varied work being accomplished, or attempted, and can develop and understand positive effects for both the teachers and the college or university. The key here is to discover the varied work being done and keep that variedness in perspective, i.e. this is their own positive contribution to the world. A self evaluation that helps deans in this way, can also help deans reflect on ways they can serve these teachers in the furtherance of their own (the teacher's) work. It is clear that the job of evaluation rests ultimately with deans, but teachers can help in this responsibility with self evaluations.

2. One source or diverse sources? There is a trend today to try to judge good teaching only by the use of standardized student evaluation forms. No one wants to openly admit this trend, but it is clearly evident. A friend told of one dean who awarded merit pay based on a particular question of a standardized student evaluation form. (The question asked students to rate the overall quality of teaching.) If a teacher refused to submit the results of this question they would receive no merit pay at all. If we look at advertisements for teachers in higher education, it is not unusual today to see a statement such as this, 'Applicants must provide evidence of excellence in teaching (superior evaluations)'.

It may not be admitted, but the fact is that there is an increasingly strong preference to evaluate by means of one,

preferably standardized, source. Even the builders of such standardized student evaluations stress, in the instructions for use, that this is only one of many sources which should be utilized in evaluations. Deans depend on several combined sources toward a better judgment with respect to an individual teacher. "Cooperation from departmental and divisional heads and the judicious use of student judgments are but two of the resources available in such a task."[13] There is always a comforting feeling when either (a) different sources of evaluation agree with a dean's preconceived judgment or (b) different sources yield consistent results. Where deans have to be careful is in doing the same things with many sources that they seem to do with one standardized source. What deans have a tendency to do is to rank people, or rate teachers according to some measuring scale.

Rating teachers, or ranking them competitively, is tantamount to ignoring the varied work of individual teachers. Rating, by whatever means, pits one teacher against another on a common scale. Rating or ranking as a process in evaluations has much wrong with it. But, there are times when it becomes necessary to be competitive and utilize such a process. If deans are being granted a fixed dollar amount of money allocated for merit pay, each teacher must, then, be in competition for such money. Any such ranking of teachers will be incomplete and can only serve a very limited purpose,

---

[13]Ibid., p. 40.

such as allocating merit pay. Such a ranking is of little value when reaching decisions on promotions or tenure. Some deans may believe that the ranking has spillover effects when it comes to other, more significant decisions. To believe this is to lose that important perspective deans need with respect to a teacher's own work.

Rankings and ratings are easy to use, but simply are incorrect as evaluations of teaching. Rank is a word of many meanings. Perhaps we can learn from one of the specific usages of rank; "Oh my offense is ranke, it smells to heaven."[14] This quotation from Hamlet gives us a clue as to the usefulness of rankings in the evaluation of teachers. Steven Kellman, a literature professor, reflects on ratings when he says, ". . . like race horses, we are bred to compete, even if we no longer need (to) compete, for bread. I understand they finally shoot horses. Certainly a love of wisdom is a more philosophical stance than a febrile quest for even more kudos, . . . But in this, the scholar-teacher is just another creature of an inescapable larger culture that continuously rates hotels, TV programs, bonds, eggs, and prize fighters."[15] Ratings have only limited uses in higher education and have little to do

---

[14]Steven G. Kellman, "Rating, Rating, Rating," Academe (Washington, D.C.: The American Association of University Professors, November-December, 1982) p. 29.

[15]Ibid., parenthesis added.

with evaluating good teaching and teachers.

Kellman further reflects, ". . . all we can do, it seems, is count committee assignments, pages published, and responses to various teaching styles. Locked in (a) seminar room and forced to translate quality into quantity, that is what I and my colleagues did, though the languages are incongruent, and I am not certain we were all fluent in the first to begin with. Am I the first to imagine that some day the top-ranked professor in the top-ranked university in the most advanced nation in the world will dispense with all other distractions in order to devote himself exclusively to what has long been a dominant priority: ranking everything but himself? Then, in a trance, he will evaluate himself, whereupon the entire rococo edifice will instanter-and not by degree-disintegrate. Then, perhaps, we can begin again from alpha, with first things first, gladly to learn and gladly to teach."[16] Regardless of whether deans utilize one standardized source or, preferably, several sources for evaluations, deans must keep in mind that we are in higher education for learning and teaching.

3. Should teachers be team players or personalities? Another tension that affects deans during evaluations is trying to judge teachers on either their cooperation or uniqueness. It would seem that if teachers are to do their own work in positive ways,

---

[16]Ibid., parenthesis added.

and deans wish to serve and encourage such work, being unique would be judged as good. This is particularly true if a teacher was being recognized beyond the individual college or university, such as in professional organizations. More often than not, though, being unique in this way seems to be viewed negatively. Teachers who are unique tend to be labelled as mavericks and generally uncooperative.

This tension is found in other areas, such as between a radio announcer and the general manager of a radio station. The station management wants announcers to push the call letters and frequency of the station. Announcers want to push their own name and talent. A radio station general manager is afraid that if they promote the name of a radio announcer, should he or she leave, they will take the station's audience with them. The radio announcer is proud working for the particular station, but wants to be known as a unique announcer. In our mobile and temporary society <u>people</u> <u>do move</u> around and shift from job to job. Many radio stations have realized that the unique announcer can help promote the entire radio station (and that's why morning personalities watch ratings very carefully). At the same time it is important to cooperate, reach a balance between the two, and encourage announcer longevity on a particular radio station.

Is a team player always viewed as positive? Many times we find that being a team player is the same as being cooperative, being cooperative is usually viewed as being good. There are negative aspects to being a team player, however. There are

some teachers who volunteer for committee assignments to the point of being so busy that their teaching suffers and they literally have no academic pursuits, save for committee work. Team players become institution-bound and make committee assignments and organizational issues their primary work. Some of these team players even spend their class time discussing all the institutional nuances, rather than the subject matter at hand. Other team players may be using cooperativeness as a cover for their lack of ability in both teaching and scholarship.

Deans will see the positive impact of both team players and those teachers who need elbow room to pursue their own work. We can't simply say that team players, as cooperative as they seem, are positive and good; while teachers who are unique (seemingly uncooperative) are negative. Of course the business of the institution must be accomplished and, traditionally, it has been the faculty doing it. Some measure of cooperativeness is necessary, but not at the total exclusion of a teacher's own pursuits. Being cooperative, to a point, and being unique, to a point, can both be positive and good attributes for teachers. Perhaps deans need to establish ranges of reasonableness with respect to these issues, i.e. teachers need to be involved in the governance of the institution and should serve on at least two committees but never more than four. By establishing a range of reasonableness, deans will be able to balance the notion of serving the teachers in the furtherance of their own work and having teachers serve the institution in a

positive way. It is not simply O.K. for teachers to be pleased with themselves and their own work. Deans should establish what parameters (a schematic) are necessary to serve both teachers and the college or university.

4. Should deans be objective? It seems that the one, almost universal, point of agreement with respect to evaluations is that deans should be objective in their judgments. When deans are objective they are removed from emotion and personal favoritism. Being objective allows deans to treat teachers equally, impartially and fairly, while preserving the goals of the institution. Objectivity is necessary, deans believe, to be just in evaluations. It is not difficult to understand, therefore, how deans can push this notion out further to defend standardized student evaluations. At least these tools are objective and fair to all. On the surface, at least, it would appear that being objective might insure what Kant termed 'disinterestedness' in judging. On closer inspection, however, there are things wrong about trying to be objective.

The most obvious flaw about being objective in evaluations is that in the process of being fair and just and treating everyone impartially, we are really using a ranking methodology. By removing ourselves from emotion, by whatever fair technique we choose, we tend to introduce a sameness into the process. Treating people equitably or fairly requires some kind of measuring device or scale

to which each teacher will be compared. Deans simply lose the importance of varied work by trying to be objective. A more significant flaw about being objective in an evaluation process is the fact that this translates into being almost inhuman. When deans remove themselves from emotion and passion in an attempt to be objective, they may be removing basic human characteristics so as to make themselves less than human in practice. This is not at all what Kant, or Hannah Arendt, meant by the notion of 'disinterestedness'. One of the nicest things about human beings is that we are capable of emotion and passion and being thoughtful at the same time. If deans become inhuman, in the name of being objective, it would seem to be difficult to judge teachers who approach their teaching and scholarship in a thoughtful, yet passionate way. Being objective, therefore, is to lose one's perspective with respect to the humanness of teachers. The human characteristics of passion and emotion cannot be considered bad when judging teachers.

5. Should an evaluation process be structured or unstructured?

While not as sensitive as some of the other tensions present in evaluations, the structure of an evaluation process becomes an issue to teachers, and therefore deans. In general, processes or systems in the United States tend to be highly structured versus those comparable processes in Eastern countries, such as Japan. Those who have studied Japanese processes have mixed messages for us, but there is a sense that some in the Japanese culture believe

the best system for doing something is no system. Conversely, Americans tend to create systems replete with title and subtitle ad nauseum. Deans need to understand that teachers will be uneasy if they are denied tenure, promotions or merit pay especially if they do not know how judgments are being made. Some structure needs to be established by deans, or by deans working in conjunction with teachers, so that the process of evaluation is clearly set forth and understood.

While the process of evaluation needs structure of some kind, structure in and of itself should not be predominant. Neither should structure be established to insure objectivity. "To do justice to the real situation it is necessary to consider the reactions and capabilities of people, and not confine oneself to machinery or abstract concepts."[17]

What has been presented here was not meant to be an exhaustive list of the tensions felt by deans with respect to the evaluation process. Rather, some common or typical tensions were reviewed in an attempt to show how to keep one's perspective in the face of these tensions and trends. If deans are able to rethink evaluations by adopting the right attitudes and keeping these attitudes as one's perspective, perhaps deans can reduce the tensions involved in the evaluation process. Deans certainly need to communicate with the teachers they are judging, but they also need to communicate with

---

[17]E. F. Schumacher, Small Is Beautiful (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1973) p. 182.

themselves so as to keep things in perspective. Evan Blythin, a communications professor, sums up the tensions and importance of perspective by saying, ". . . I think that if there is immortality in higher education, it lies in quality, balance, and integrity in publication, teaching and service."[18]

What Can We Do?

The question, 'what can or should we do?', cannot go begging or remain unanswered. After reading an involved rethinking of fundamental issues and listening to the stories of three teachers, the reader must now have some direction, a statement addressing the whole dilemma. Actually there are many good ways to approach evaluation processes. What follows is simply a particular idea to consider, sort of a thought experiment. In answer to the question, 'What can we do?', the following suggestions are presented.[19]

Essentials

The essential characteristics of an evaluation process are: (1) A serious attempt to understand and recognize excellence in

---

[18]Evan Blythin, "A Bound Volume Is No Guarantee of Life Ever After," The Chronicle of Higher Education (Washington, D.C.: The Chronicle of Higher Education, Inc., June 8, 1983) p. 56., emphasis added.

[19]It was inevitable and fair that the reader would ask the writer, 'So, what would you do?'.

teaching, (2) A philosophical agreement in ideology, (3) A shared judgment between deans and teachers, and (4) Hope for the future.

1. Excellence in teaching. Deans must seriously consider the issue of excellence in teaching and what that means. Excellence ". . . is a value charged word which is so much used, so commonly waived as a flag, that it has become a cliche. And rescuing cliches from their popularization is an awkward if not impossible task. All that can be done is to take the original meaning of the term--if it can any longer be determined--very seriously."[20] The underlying value of any evaluation process must be in understanding and recognizing excellence in teaching. Perhaps deans will establish some criteria from a schematic, but the essence of excellence as an event must be studied.

2. Philosophical agreement. Deans need to establish the ideological basis, for an evaluation process, to achieve philosophical agreement between themselves and teachers. This would provide a very honest and up front basis for judgment. It would allow teachers a solid chance to know and evaluate the basis under which teaching, learning and judgment will take place. Some teachers may find that they are uncomfortable with this ideological basis and may decide to pursue their careers at other institutions. While this may sound harsh,

---

[20]"Apologies To Thoreau," MANAS (Los Angeles: Manas Publishing Company, February 2, 1983) p. 4. The original word being discussed here was vision, not excellence.

it is not nearly as harsh or deceiving as many judgments being made today. This is especially true when deans verbalize one ideology and judge utilizing a different one.

How might we form this ideological basis in hopes of reaching philosophical agreement? As a starting point a dean could say, 'Here are my four favorite books or authors. These books form the basis for my ideological outlook on teaching, teachers and education. Read the books and utilize this ideology in every course you teach.'[21] Recall that Arendt and Kant would have us understand that judgment is a choice and the meaning is in the choice. Therefore, the ideological basis would be formed by the particular choice of books or authors. As a starting point, and example, a dean might choose these books:

1. Robert Pirsig, Zen And The Art Of Motorcycle Maintenance
2. Eugen Herrigel, Zen And The Art Of Archery
3. Hannah Arendt, The Human Condition
4. E. F. Schumacher, Small Is Beautiful

Most teachers, to begin with, would probably think this whole process as strange. Then a feeling of fear may set in as teachers read the works and try to figure out what, exactly, they are supposed to be doing. A dean might alleviate some of the fear and

---

[21]This approach was first suggested to me by David Schuman. There is always a chance that a particular dean might not be well read, or possibly not have given much thought to evaluation issues. I would hope that deans would choose some of our greatest minds as authors. In this thought experiment a dean may appear as an authoritarian; so be it. What also might be helpful is to hire business

strangeness by starting the process with an initial statement to provide focus.[22]

For example, Pirsig helps us understand seemingly divergent viewpoints, such as the romantic-classic split, through the events of excellence. Pirsig's friend, John, had loose handlebars on his BMW. The classic solution would be to have the exact shim machined by the manufacturer and fitted to the handlebars. The romantic solution would be to find any strip of metal, even from a beer can, as long as it helped keep the handlebars tight. The solutions are divergent, but there is beauty in both solutions. "I should say, to explain this, that beer-can aluminum is soft and sticky, as metals go. Perfect for the application. Aluminum doesn't oxidize in wet weather--or, more precisely, it always has a thin layer of oxide that prevents any further oxidation. Also perfect."[23] The fact is that there is beauty or excellence in both solutions. The beauty or excellence is what ties the two solutions, seemingly divergent, together. If we can work out what we believe to be excellence in teaching, perhaps we can cut across all of our divergent viewpoints.

---

people to run the 'business' of the institution and then allow deans and teachers to work on education, learning and teaching.

[22]Another good book to suggest might be Joseph Epstein's MASTERS. Everyone could read stories about best teachers and then reflect on their own best teachers.

[23]Robert M. Pirsig, Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance (New York: Bantam Books, 1974) p. 51.

Herrigel lets us know that there are other ways to judge and measure than those with which we are most familiar. When someone says, "He who has a hundred miles to walk should reckon ninety as half the journey,"[24] it is very disconcerting to us. We would be wise to think in such terms as we search for a way to evaluate teaching. It is not easy to break out of our current understandings, but Herrigel helps us gain the confidence necessary to understand the world in new and different ways. Arendt helps us to know the importance of our own work. She explores the differences between the commitment to our work versus our labor. Hopefully we will begin to stress our work in teaching, rather than consider it simply a job, thereby making the whole process more serious. We tend to ignore our real work and consider it all labor. "As a result, all serious activities, irrespective of their fruits, are called labor, and every activity which is not necessary either for the life of the individual or for the life process of society is subsumed under playfulness."[25]

And Schumacher helps us to balance that which we know and understand (economics and technology) with a strong concern for people. While Ghandi's non-violence stance in South Africa and India was very impressive and moving, Schumacher helps bring us a littler closer

---

[24]Eugen Herrigel, Zen In The Art of Archery, trans. by R. F. C. Hull (New York: Vintage Books, 1971) p. 61.

[25]Hannah Arendt, The Human Condition (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958) p. 127.

to the Ghandian ideals. In other words, we can begin to work with each other and support each other's work rather than trying to 'best' each other. These examples of choice in books and initial statements form the beginnings of an articulated ideological basis. To reach philosophical agreement we must move beyond this basis.

3. Shared judgment. Once we have established the ideological basis, we can then begin to work on a philosophical agreement between deans and teachers. This agreement will start with the ideological basis and, hopefully, build into a community of thought about what excellence is, in teaching, and how it ought to be judged. "I believe that the nature of excellence, wisdom, freedom and virtue are open ended questions which cannot be answered by the application of scientific reasoning, but instead are developed through discussion based both on personal experience and the thoughts of the greatest minds known to us. This form of thought . . . gives one a sense of perspective and of what is worthwhile."[26]

The form that shared judgment could take might be anything. One suggestion could be a seminar class with the dean. While this suggestion is also quite unusual, it could be more fruitful and helpful than a dean's tea, or a professional conference or even post-doctoral credits. Shared judgment would be reflections, together between a dean and teachers, on the ideological basis by reading and

---

[26]Richard Farrell, as stated in an unpublished paper, November, 1982.

discussing the dean's four favorite books. At the same time it would be important for the dean and teachers to share their thoughts and reflect on it all. In other words, deans and teachers can meet on the ideological basis for sharing and reflecting about what might be important in the evaluation of teaching and teachers. "Determinant judgments subsume the particular under a general rule (what we do now); reflective judgments on the contrary, 'derive' the rule from the particular (what we need to do)."[27]

If a seminar class with a dean helps practice reflective judgment about the issues in evaluations, it will also help build a community spirit between deans and teachers. "This sensus communis is what judgment appeals to in everyone, and it is this possible appeal that gives judgments their special validity. The it-pleases-or-displeases-me, which as a feeling seems so utterly private and noncommunicative, is actually rooted in this community sense and is therefore open to communication once it has been transformed by reflection, which takes all others and their feelings into account. In other words, when one judges, one judges as a member of a community."[28] Once we have an ideological basis for reflection, the process of judgment in a community will move us toward some

---

[27]Ronald Beiner, ed., Hannah Arendt--Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982) p. 83, parentheses added.

[28]Ibid., p. 72.

philosophical agreements.

"In the last analysis . . . our decisions about right or wrong will depend on our choice of company, with whom we wish to spend our lives. In the unlikely case that someone should come and tell us that he would prefer Bluebeard for company, and hence as his example, all we could do would be to make sure that he would never come near us. But the likelihood that someone would come and tell us that he does not mind and that any company will be good enough for him is, I fear, by far greater."[29] Hopefully, the notion of having a seminar class with a dean, to discuss ideology and make judgments with respect to evaluations, will help community spirit to flourish in such a way that we can ferret out those who are simply cooperating team players. A seminar, which ought to be ongoing, may help teachers become actively involved, as part of a community rather than individually, in the evaluation process.

It is not intended here, through a seminar class, to force compliance with the group. "Furthermore, while I take into account others when judging, this does not mean that I conform in my judgment to those of others, I still speak with my own voice and I do not count noses in order to arrive at what I think is right."[30] The pressure to conform to a community can be enormous. In the evaluation process deans would need to keep things in perspective and recognize the individual judgments of teachers toward their own work, in addition to some measure of cooperation in the community.

---

[29]Ibid., p. 113. [30]Ibid., p. 108.

Deans need to understand and appreciate the positive impact of varied judgments.

The process of judging has much to do with our human dignity and feeling at home in the world. Shared judgment allows us to belong in the present and take pleasure in examples from the past. It allows us to reconcile our existence without becoming caught up in universal conformity. Instead, we reflect on a particular exemplary ideology toward our own particular work, yet as part of a community, with excellence as a philosophical agreement. "Once again we are confronted by a great decision, as men were in the time of the ancient Greeks. Which is the more important: Knowing how the world works or understanding how we should live? And is there, perhaps, a harmony between the two?"[31] This should be the spirit of a seminar class with a dean; the spirit of shared judgment.

4. Hope for the future. The last essential characteristic of an evaluation process is hope for the future. "Progress as the standard by which to judge history somehow reverses the old principle that the meaning of a story reveals itself only at its end (no one can be called blessed before his death). In Kant, the story's or event's importance lies precisely not at its end but in its opening up new horizons for the future. It is the hope it contained for future generations. . . ."[32] Hope can take many forms. It may

---

[31]"A Thread of Self-Knowledge," MANAS (Los Angeles: Manas Publishing Company, January 5, 1983) p. 2.

[32]Beiner, op. cit., p. 56.

be hope in becoming a better teacher, or hope for doing better work. We may find hope arising in the areas of job security, enthusiasm and collegiality. Whatever form hope seems to take, it is very important that an evaluation process brings deans and teachers hope for the future.

A seminar class is simply one methodology. It is not critical that it be implemented in an exacting and particular way. What is critical, and central, here is the notion of reflecting on ideology together, with shared judgment toward excellence and with hope for the future. Any methodology is secondary to this accomplishment.

An End Note

It has been suggested that a non-tenured assistant professor may be quite nervous and upset about a dean proceeding to evaluate in such an unorthodox way. This is a valid concern and deserves attention. There really ought to be a two level evaluation. The first level would be an evaluation of minimum performance based on the schematic of a teacher (as discussed in Chapter III), such as: meet your classes on time, call in when ill, attend faculty meetings, work on committees, etc. This schematic must be clearly articulated so each teacher knows exactly what is required in order to retain their teaching position. Hopefully this will help alleviate the fears for a non-tenured teacher. The second level of evaluation would be the thought experiment previously discussed. The purpose of this level of evaluation would be to work together (teachers and

deans) to determine what excellence means in teaching.

The ideas presented in this final chapter, and including all the rethinking of basic issues and the stories of the teachers, revolve around higher education and the evaluation of teachers and teaching. It seems that most of these ideas could be helpful to anyone who has responsibility for evaluating the work of others.

This work was not intended to reach a definitive conclusion which provided models to hold up as examples. It only intended to rethink education, teaching and evaluations. What was to be accomplished was to help deans and teachers take the evaluation of teaching in higher education seriously. A framework of attitudes and a suggestion as to how to start anew in evaluations was provided. There is much that remains a mystery about this whole process, and there is much work that could be done from hereon.

One path that could be taken is to actually implement these suggestions and monitor the experiences. Other suggestions could be implemented as long as there was sufficient adherence to the framework presented. It would be helpful and instructive to interview teachers and deans before and after such an experience. Deans could learn much about the varied work of individual teachers, and come to appreciate the variedness, through in-depth interviewing of several teachers held up by different institutions as being excellent teachers.

Regardless of further research, or the form of experiments and field testing, the underlying notion must remain intact, that being the pursuit and recognition of excellence in teaching.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

"A Thread of Self-knowledge." MANAS. Los Angeles: Manas Publishing Company, January 5, 1983.

Adams, Henry. The Education of Henry Adams, Sentry edition. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1961.

Agenda. Faculty Senate. Springfield, Massachusetts: Western New England College, 3/2/81.

Agnew, Spiro. "Spiro Agnew Speaks Out," record album PRM - 316.

Allen, Woody. "My speech to the Graduates." New York Times, August 10, 1979.

"Apologies To Thoreau." MANAS. Los Angeles: Manas Publishing Company, February 2, 1983.

Arendt, Hannah. Men In Dark Times. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1955-1968.

Arendt, Hannah. The Human Condition. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958.

Arendt, Hannah. The Life of the Mind - Volume One - Thinking. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971.

Arendt, Hannah. The Life of the Mind - Volume Two - Willing. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978.

Aubrecht, Judith D. "Reliability, Validity and Generalizability of Student Ratings of Instruction." Idea Paper No. 6. Center for Faculty Evaluation & Development. Kansas State University, November, 1981.

Beiner, Ronald ed. Hannah Arendt--Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982.

Bellenger, Danny N., Kenneth L. Bernhardt, Jac L. Goldstucker. Qualitative Research in Marketing. Chicago: The American Marketing Association, 1976.

Blythin, Evan. "A Bound Volume Is No Guarantee of Life Ever After." The Chronicle of Higher Education. Washington, D.C.: The Chronicle of Higher Education, Inc., June 8, 1983.

Boone, Louis E. and David L. Kurtz. Contemporary Marketing, Third edition. Hinsdale, Illinois: The Dryden Press, 1980.

Bowles, Samuel and Herbert Gintis. Schooling in Capitalist America. New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1976.

Buber, Martin. I and Thou, trans. Walter Kaufmann. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970.

Buber, Martin. "On National Education," The Writings of Martin Buber, ed. Will Herberg. New York: Meridian Books, 1956.

Burke, Richard J. "Two Concepts of Liberal Education." Academe. Washington, D.C.: The American Association of University Professors, October, 1980.

Campbell, Kenneth. Sermon. Wilbraham, Massachusetts: Church of the Epiphany, Fall, 1982.

Chandler, Theodore A. "The Questionable Status of Student Evaluations of Teaching." Teaching of Psychology. Vol. 5., No. 3. October 1978.

Dewey, John. Democracy And Education. New York: The Free Press, 1916.

Donoghue, Denis. "Performing Live, in the Classroom." The New York Times Book Review. April 5, 1981.

Eble, Kenneth E. The Recognition and Evaluation of Teaching. Washington, D.C.: The American Association of University Professors, 1971.

Eddy, Peter. A conversation.

Eliot, T. S. "On Teaching The Appreciation of Poetry." Toward Liberal Education, Fourth edition, ed. Louis G. Locke, William M. Gibson and George Arms. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962.

"End-of-the-Century Question." MANAS. Los Angeles: Manas Publishing Company, June 1, 1983.

Epstein, Joseph. "A Class Act." QUEST/81.

Epstein, Joseph ed. Masters: Portraits of Great Teachers. New York: Basic Books, 1981.

Evans, James W., Ph.D. "Equality & Freedom in America--Two Views of Justice." University of San Diego--School of Business Administration Newsletter. Autumn, 1980. Volume 4, Number 1.

Farrell, Richard. An unpublished paper. November 1982.

Gourman, Jack. The Gourman Report--Ratings of American Colleges. Phoenix: The Continuing Education Institute, Inc., 1967.

Hartz, Louis. The Liberal Tradition in America. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1955.

Herrigel, Eugen. Zen In The Art of Archery, trans. by R. F. C. Hull. New York: Vintage Books, 1971.

Hesse, Hermann. The Glass Bead Game (Magister Ludi), trans. by Richard and Clara Winston. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969.

Highet, Gilbert. The Art of Teaching. New York: Vintage Books, 1950.

Highet, Gilbert. "The Unpredictable Intellect." Toward Liberal Education, fourth edition, ed. Louis G. Locke, William M. Gibson and George Arms. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962.

Hodock, Calvin. "Hodock cites 'Pitfalls' of Marketing Research." Marketing News. Chicago: The American Marketing Association, June 1, 1979.

Hodock, Calvin. "Intuition, Microstudies, Humanized Research can identify emotions that motivate consumers." Marketing News. Chicago: The American Marketing Association, March 19, 1982.

Hofstadter, Richard. Anti-Intellectualism In American Life. New York: Vintage Books, 1962.

James, William. Essays in Radical Empiricism and a Pluralistic Universe, ed. Ralph Barton Perry. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1971.

James, William. "The Ph.D. Octopus." Educational Review. February, 1918.

Jansen, Dr. K. Edward. Memorandum. Springfield, Massachusetts: Western New England College, February 26, 1982.

Jencks, Christopher and David Riesman. The Academic Revolution. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1969.

Kellman, Steven G. "Rating, Rating, Rating." Academe. Washington, D.C.: The American Association of University Professors, November-December, 1982.

Kidder, Tracy. The Soul of a New Machine. New York: Avon Books, 1981.

Kilpatrick, William Heard. "A Modern Theory of Learning." Selected Readings In the Philosophy of Education, Third edition, ed. Joe Park. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1968.

Lawrence, D. H. Studies in Classic American Literature. New York: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1961.

Learning Research Center of the University of Tennessee. "Evaluating Instruction: Learning/Perceptions." Spring, 1971. No. 16.

Le Duc, Thomas. Piety and Intellect at Amherst College 1865-1912. New York: Columbia University Press, 1946.

McCall, David B. "Solve Business Problems with New Management Attitudes." Marketing News. Chicago: The American Marketing Association, March 18, 1983.

McCarthy, E. Jerome, John F. Grashof and Andrew A. Brogowicz, eds. Readings In Basic Marketing, Third edition. Homewood, Illinois: Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1981.

McCormack, Patricia. "How To Spot a Great Teacher." The Daily News. Springfield, Massachusetts: The Springfield Newspapers. Tuesday, July 22, 1980.

McKeachie, Wilbert. "Student Ratings of Faculty: A Reprise." Academe. Washington, D.C.: The American Association of University Professors, October, 1979.

Miller, Richard I. Evaluating Faculty Performance. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1972.

Mobberley, David G. and Myron F. Wicke. The Deanship of the Liberal Arts College. Nashville: Board of Education, The Methodist Church, 1962.

Nylund, Lucy. An unpublished paper.

Pirsig, Robert M. Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance. New York: Bantam Books, 1974.

Plato's Republic, trans. G.M.A. Grube. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1974.

Polanyi, Michael. Personal Knowledge. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962.

Rice, Paul. "Grading the Teacher: How to Get High Marks." The Chronicle of Higher Education. Washington, D.C.: The Chronicle of Higher Education, Inc., October 7, 1981.

Rudolph, Frederick. The American College and University. New York: Vintage Books, 1962.

Sartre, Jean-Paul. Search For a Method, trans. Hazel E. Barnes. New York: Vintage Books, 1968.

Schumacher, E. F. Small Is Beautiful. New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1973.

Schuman, David. Bureaucracies, Organizations and Administration. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1976.

Schuman, David. Class remarks, October 8, 1980.

Schuman, David. Policy Analysis, Education, and Everyday Life. Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath and Company, 1982.

Shaler, Nathaniel Southgate. "How Agassiz Taught Shaler." Toward Liberal Education, Fourth edition, ed. Louis G. Locke, William M. Gibson and George Arms. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962.

Showerman, Grant. "College Professors Exposed." Educational Review. XXXVI, 1910.

Simpson, Alan. "The Marks of an Educated Man." Toward Liberal Education, Fourth edition, ed. Louis G. Locke, William M. Gibson and George Arms. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962.

Statement. Ad Hoc Committee "A" on Student Evaluation of Faculty. Springfield, Massachusetts: Western New England College, October 20, 1981.

Strohm, Paul. "Toward an AAUP Policy on Evaluation of Administrators." Academe. Washington, D.C.: The American Association of University Professors, December, 1980.

Support for Teaching At Major Universities, ed. Stanford C. Ericksen. Ann Arbor, Michigan: The University of Michigan, 1979.

Taylor, Frederick Winslow. The Principles of Scientific Management. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1967.

The American College Dictionary. New York: Random House, Inc., 1961.

Thomas, Lewis. The Lives of a Cell. Toronto: Bantam Books, Inc., 1974.

Veysey, Laurence R. The Emergence Of the American University. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965.

Vonnegut, Kurt Jr. Player Piano. New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1952.

Whitehead, Alfred North. "The Aims of Education." Selected Readings In the Philosophy of Education, Third edition, ed. Joe Park. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1968.

Wills, Garry. Nixon Agonistes. New York: New American Library, 1969.

Wilson, Woodrow. "The Preceptorial System At Princeton." Educational Review. XXXIX, 1910.

Zigli, Ronald M. and Wesley E. Patton, III. "Matching Business Faculty to Student Desires. . . ." Collegiate News & Views. Cincinnati: South-West Publishing, Winter, 1980-81.

Zikmund, William G. and Michael F. d'Amico. "25 teaching excellence tips for marketing professors: The collected wisdom of an anonymous book salesman." Marketing News. Chicago: The American Marketing Association, July 24, 1981.